I'M A LITERARY SHARECROPPER, By David L. Cohn

The Saturday Review of Literature

VOL. XXII No. 24 NEW YORK, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1940 FIFTEEN CENTS

"TRELAWNY"
By Margaret Armstrong
Reviewed by Richard Aldington

"RALEIGH'S EDEN"
By Inglis Fletcher
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"MINORITY REPORT"
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By Paul Vialar
Reviewed by Basil Davenport

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(Drawn for The Saturday Review by Joseph Stonehill)
MARGARET ARMSTRONG: "Takes her hero at his own valuation, and his story loses nothing in her retelling" . . . *(See page 5)*

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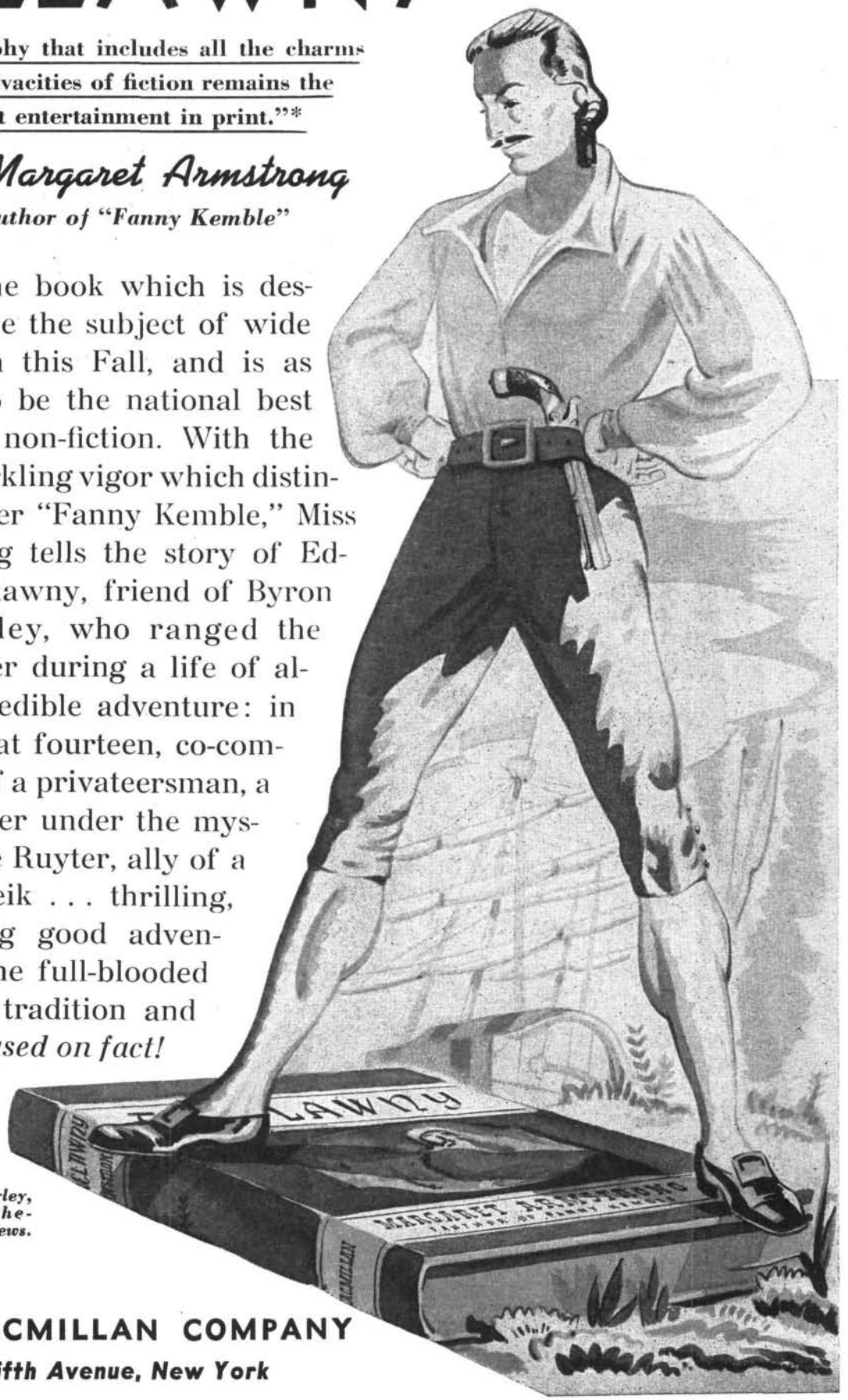
TRELAWNY

"Biography that includes all the charms and vivacities of fiction remains the best entertainment in print."*

by Margaret Armstrong

Author of "Fanny Kemble"

This is the book which is destined to be the subject of wide discussion this Fall, and is as certain to be the national best seller in non-fiction. With the same sparkling vigor which distinguished her "Fanny Kemble," Miss Armstrong tells the story of Edward Trelawny, friend of Byron and Shelley, who ranged the world over during a life of almost incredible adventure: in the navy at fourteen, co-commander of a privateersman, a commander under the mysterious De Ruyter, ally of a desert sheik . . . thrilling, thundering good adventure, in the full-blooded romantic tradition and *all of it based on fact!*



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**Christopher Morley, in Book-of-the-Month Club News.*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

60 Fifth Avenue, New York

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The Saturday Review of Literature

I'm A Literary Sharecropper

DAVID L. COHN

WE sat around the red-bellied stove of the Trail Lake plantation store in the Mississippi Delta cussing the government because the duck season was so short a man could hardly get a shot before he had to put away his gun and wait for the next season to roll around. What was the use, we miserably asked ourselves, of having a Democratic Administration if it was going to treat us just as though we were Republican Vermonters who could never be brought to see the light? There is no telling to what depths of bitterness our reflections might have descended, had they not been interrupted by a timid knock at the office door. "Come in," said Mr. Boland, the plantation manager. A huge Negro, hat in hand, shyly entered the room.

"Good morning, Heavy Duty," said Mr. Boland.

"Good mawning, white folks," replied Heavy Duty. "How is y'all?"

"Fair to middling," answered the manager. "What's agitating your mind today?"

"Boss Man," said Heavy Duty, "my feets been eetchin' to git back here ever since I lef' out for Loosiana. Us wants to make one mo' crop wid y'all 'fo' us dies, an' you knows us is de cotton-makingest niggers in de Delta." Heavy Duty laughed. We all laughed. It was evident that he was going to get what he had come to get.

"Well, I thought you'd come back," said Mr. Boland. "The man hasn't been born who can drink this Trail Lake pump water and stay away."

"Hit's de Lawd's truth," replied Heavy Duty. "I jes' needs me a little money to he'p me move, and I'll be here 'fo' sun-up Tuesday."

"Mr. Mac will fix you up," said the manager.

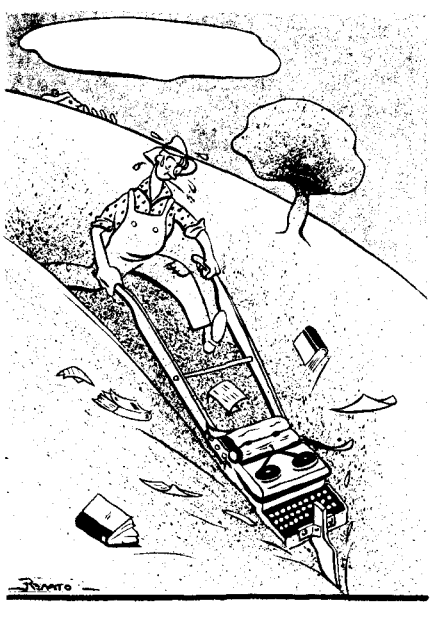
"Yassuh," answered the prospective sharecropper. "Hit's jes' one mo' thang I wants to ax does dese white genmum 'scuse me for cuttin' acrost 'em. How much is you 'vancing a month?"

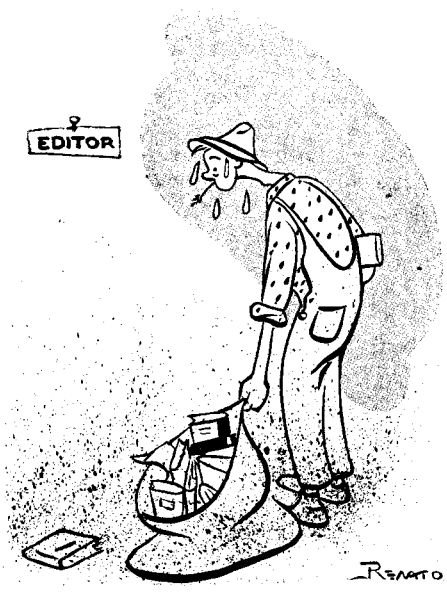
"Fifteen dollars."

"Boss, be on de lookout for us Tuesday."

AS Heavy Duty walked away I began to reflect that we were economic brothers under the skin. He is a cotton sharecropper. I am a literary sharecropper. Each of us, by virtue of the system, has a certain amount of economic security even if it is at a low level. His employer (the planter) and my employer (the publisher) must keep us alive so that we may create cotton and books by the sales of which they earn their livelihood. If Heavy Duty gets an advance of fifteen dollars a month so that he can eat and clothe himself while he is making a crop, I get a lump sum advance so that I can eat and clothe myself while I am writing a book. In both cases, whether by calculation or coincidence, the advance always seems to be just enough to keep body and soul within hailing distance of one another. If my Negro colleague is supervised in his crop operations by a person of allegedly greater agricultural experience (the plantation manager) and pays for supervision in one form or another, so also is my work supervised by a person of allegedly greater literary experience (the editor) while I pay for his services in one form or another. Heavy Duty has no control over the sale of the cotton he grows. I have no control over the sale of the book I write. And to bring the wheel full circle, if the sharecropper sometimes runs away from the plantation in mid-season without finishing his crop and never repays the planter his advance, so too, does the writer sometimes pocket an advance and never finishes his promised book.

When Heavy Duty has grown his cotton and corn and it has been sold or divided, he gets from one-fourth to one-half of the money or commodities minus the sums that have been advanced to him. But he also gets a cabin rent-free, free fuel, and ground for a vegetable garden; he may raise hogs and keep a cow. These things represent a sizable addition to cash income. Publishers, however, have not yet got around to providing rent-free cottages for writers or providing garden plots on which they might (if they knew how) grow cabbages and cowpeas. If the writer is the average novelist he will spend a year on a book which will sell twenty-five hundred copies and bring him $500 or $600 in royalties. This sum will not make him rich but it will prevent him from suffering the woes of the investor in a period of dark financial uncertainty. He will be





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the freer to create because his midnight slumbers will not be disturbed by torturing doubts as to whether he should invest his year's income in American Telephone and Telegraph or General Motors common. Everybody knows that even a modest amount of wealth, or an income approaching that of a plumber in a small town, prevents a writer from doing good work. That is why Montaigne, Leo Tolstoy, and Proust never amounted to much. Wise in the ways of life and literature we see to it that the real income of the novelist is about on a par with that of the sharecropper.

But Heavy Duty and I are not limited in our incomes merely to growing cotton and writing books. He adds to his cash resources by doing odd jobs around the plantation for day wages: that is, he makes ditches, clears land, hauls firewood, and does other small tasks for the white folks. I attempt to add to my book income by writing magazine articles and lecturing. We are unique among the workers of the world in that the principal occupation of our lives is often insufficient to pay for our keep; the sideshow makes up for the deficits of the circus. It is as though a New York stockbroker ran a peanut stand after the close of the market; or a corporation lawyer played the trombone in a night-club band. One of our ablest biographers, for example, writes magazine articles about Joan Crawford and other illustrious Hollywood figures, in order to indulge in the luxury of writing authoritative biographies of American Presidents.

I MUST tell you about a short story I once wrote at the behest of my creditors. It ran to six thousand words. I sent it off to a magazine of large national circulation and received for it one hundred dollars, or less than two cents a word. A few months later while flicking through the financial section of The New York *Times*, I observed that my benefactor magazine had earned $800,000 during the past year, all of which went to the two or three men who owned it. Writers made it possible for these men to earn this vast sum in one year, but they were paid at the rate of girls sewing sacks in a sweated bag factory. I felt pretty unhappy about it at the moment but my creditors were bitter; after all, the magazine was taking bread out of the mouths of their babes. Later on, however, I felt much better. I happened to go to the city where the magazine is published and a friend while taking me out for an automobile tour, showed me the magnificent home where one of the magazine's owners lived. "I write for that man," I told my friend proudly. "That's some palace," I said feelingly. The cotton sharecropper boasts of his boss man's big automobile and fine house; it gives him a certain prestige among Negroes who work for po' white trash. The literary sharecropper is likely to feel a similar pride in the fine trappings of his magazine employers: that kind of thing is in the blood. A few months later, at Christmastime, my by now friendly feelings toward the magazine that had paid me so poorly, were raised to heights of ecstatic friendship. Just before Christmas Eve a little package arrived for me. It contained a note from the publisher, as full of warm humaneness as Scrooge after his conversion, telling me that I had done good work, expressing the hope that I'd do even better work next year, and by way of reward enclosing a coin clip which contained five crisp one-dollar bills. I forgot the three weeks of hard, agonizing labor that I had spent over the short story, and the scant cash reward. I was glad that my employers had earned $800,000 in one year. That they were decent fellows was beyond a doubt. The cotton sharecropper feels the same way when, after a year of hard labor, his boss man hands him a "clear receipt" showing that the cropper is not in debt to the planter, and then by way of piling generosity upon generosity at the season of good cheer, gives him a pint of Crab Orchard.

But money, despite the cold philosophy of the turnstiled A & P, isn't everything. Writers are the ornaments of a utilitarian society, and although Plato would have barred poets from his Republic, the generality of authors are given a certain amount of adulation among us. They are asked to dinner by wealthy hostesses; they meet "interesting people"; and any number of women's clubs will ask them to address their meetings without mention of so gross a consideration as money. Literate themselves, the ladies understand the force of George Moore's maxim: "The fruits are for the vulgar." On rare occasions even, a woman has been known to depart so violently from the hardheaded tradition of her sex as to marry a writer and live ever afterward in economic insecurity. But this isn't all. Nowadays writers—particularly novelists — are invited to come around by people who are in what is known as "society," even though the writers were born on the wrong side of the tracks. Patrons and patronage didn't die with Lord Chesterfield and Samuel Johnson, to say nothing of the fact that a best-seller novelist can be had for a dinner while Elsa Maxwell, grossly unconscious of the amenities, demands an earthier compensation for her services. And all of these things are important in the writer's life even if they don't figure in that great annual American document known to the

(*Continued on page* 15)

THIS WEEK

Articles

PAGE

I'M A LITERARY SHARECROPPER
By David L. Cohn 3

DISTILLED DISILLUSION
An Essay Review of Edmund Wilson's "To the Finland Station"
By Louis Hacker 11

Reviews

TRELAWNY
By Margaret Armstrong
Reviewed by Richard Aldington 5

ROSE OF THE SEA
By Paul Vlalar
Reviewed by Basil Davenport 6

RALEIGH'S EDEN
By Inglis Fletcher
Reviewed by Jonathan Daniels 7

MINORITY REPORT
By Bernard DeVoto
Reviewed by John Temple Graves 10

MR. LITTLEJOHN
By Martin Flavin
Reviewed by Phil Stong 10

GROWING PAINS
By Wanda Gág
Reviewed by Frances Smyth 12

TWIN STARS OF CHINA
By Evans Fordyce Carlson
Reviewed by Freda Utley 13

ENGINES OF DEMOCRACY
By Roger Burlingame
Reviewed by Paul Bixler 14

I SPEAK FOR MYSELF
By Edwin Francis Edgett
Reviewed by Joseph Hilton Smyth 14

SAILOR OF FORTUNE
By Hulbert Footner
Reviewed by Fletcher Pratt 16

THE SPIRIT OF MOLIERE
By Percy Chapman
Reviewed by Gilbert Highet 17

THE PAN AMERICAN HIGHWAY
By Harry A. Franck
Reviewed by Carleton Beals 17

Departments

YOUR LITERARY I.Q. 7

POEMS:
. . . OF ENGLAND
By Stuart Cloete 6
THE OLD WOMAN WITH FOUR SONS
By Phyllis McGinley 8

EDITORIAL 8

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 9

THE CRIMINAL RECORD 18

THE NEW BOOKS 19

RECORDS IN REVIEW
By Edward Tatnall Canby 20

DOUBLE-CROSTICS: No. 341 23

TRADE WINDS 21

NEXT WEEK

FALL
BOOK
NUMBER

THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, published weekly by the Saturday Review Company, Inc., 420 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y. Harrison Smith, President; James Nelson, Vice-President; Heinz Norden, Treasurer; Amy Loveman, Secretary. Printed in U. S. A. Vol. XXII, No. 24, October 5, 1940. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Swashbuckler Plus

TRELAWNY. By Margaret Armstrong. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1940. 379 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD ALDINGTON

IT was an odd freak of Fate which caused Shelley and Keats to be buried in the Protestant Cemetery of Rome; but it was by deliberate intent that after many years each poet was joined by the body of a devoted friend—Keats by Severn, and Shelley by Trelawny. The memories of those two poets and of Byron still haunt Italy; and although so many years have passed since they died, and their stories and legends are familiar to us all since childhood, they still interest us and still arouse strong partisan feelings. Even the friends and women of the poets have had their share of attention. There is even a "Life and Letters" of the undistinguished Severn; and Edward Trelawny has not been neglected.

It is the merest justice to say at once that Trelawny is a vastly more interesting person than poor Severn. If he had never known Byron and Shelley we should have heard of him through his "Adventures of a Younger Son." The curious coincidence that he was with Shelley at Lerici and with Byron at Missolonghi has made him famous, not merely just remembered. But for this, Trelawny would be only one of the innumerable English adventurers who for various motives explored seas and continents, from Drake to Livingstone. We should think of Trelawny as a more exciting and swashbuckling William Hickey. But when the Eastern adventurer doubles the part of pirate and correspondent to Parnassus, he is entitled to rank well above the Hickeys of his time.

Trelawny was born into a rough and ready England, which had fought one world war in the middle of the eighteenth century, and was fighting another more desperate and more prolonged against Bonaparte. He came of an old Cornish family, not remarkable either for docility or amenity, and proved to be an exceptionally violent and indisciplined specimen of his breed. All else having failed, he was handed over to the Royal Navy as a midshipman. On his first cruise his ship met the battered Colossus, returning to England with the news of Trafalgar. The last enemy battle fleet being thus disposed of, nothing was left the Navy but the tedious jobs of convoy and hunting privateers, unlikely to appeal to a born adventurer. Moreover, Trelawny disliked naval discipline and involved himself in a violent feud with one of his superior officers, a Scottish lieutenant.

From the portrait by Benjamin West

"Trelawny ranks well above the Hickeys of his time."

After beating up the lieutenant, Trelawny deserted his ship at Bombay, and joined an American privateer under the French flag, commanded by a mysterious and interesting American, de Ruyter. Miss Armstrong is puzzled by the fact that although Trelawny was known in Bombay to be a deserter, he was not arrested by the Indian Army. But at that time the Indian Army was not part of the forces of the Crown; it was the private army of the East India Company, and deserters from the Navy were none of its business. For several years Trelawny cruised the Indian Ocean with de Ruyter as a privateer, undergoing many hardships and adventures .of a kind which are called romantic by those who don't take part in them. The most pleasing of these was his rescue of a Arab girl, called Zela, whom Trelawny married in accordance with the laws of Mohammed and the high seas. Unfortunately, she died, supposedly poisoned by a rival for the affections of her good-looking pirate. These Oriental adventures are highly entertaining, and very rightly occupy a considerable part of Miss Armstrong's book.

In 1813 Trelawny was secretly landed in England, presumably bringing with him his share of loot. Contrary to his expectations, he was well received by his family, and married, only to divorce his wife not long after. He then wandered about the continent, and eventually attached himself to the Shelley-Byron-Hunt group at Pisa and Lerici. I entirely agree with Miss Armstrong in feeling that Trelawny's unlimited devotion to Shelley is a very strong point in his favor. Nothing was withheld in this friendship; there was no grudging or criticism. This was what the outlaw Shelley needed, and got from nobody else. Yet all unconsciously, Trelawny contributed to the catastrophe of Shelley's death by encouraging his love of sailing and helping with the design of the *Ariel*.

It was a strange coincidence that it was Trelawny who arranged for the burning of Shelley's body, and Trelawny who saw Lord Byron dead at Missolonghi and sent his effects back to England. Some of these I have seen and handled at John Murry's: locks of women's hair, including the maid of Athens; ruffled evening shirts, visiting cards, cancelled checks signed "yr obnt servant Byron," and a hundred other trifles which bring one near to the poet's personal life, and to Trelawny who also handled them.

The rest of Trelawny's life seems rather an anti-climax. He returned to England and traveled in Canada and America, married twice not very successfully, and set up as a country gentleman. His nearest touch with the old days of adventure came when he very nearly drowned himself swimming the St. Lawrence too close to the verge of Niagara Falls, a more perilous feat than Byron's swim from Sestos to Abydos. Trelawny lived to a great age, a legendary and awe-inspiring figure, with his noble-looking head. He knew two generations of Victorians, Tennyson after Shelley, E. B. B. and L. E. L. after Mary Shelley and Claire. No wonder he resolved to live in memories of Shelley and the past, and decided that his dead body should lie beside the ashes of *Ariel*.

Here, in briefest outline, is the story Miss Armstrong has retold in the style acceptable to our times. The question is: How much of it is true? So far as the pirate adventures are concerned, we have nothing to go on but Trelawny's own story, and it is very likely that he arranged them to conform to the lines of the fashionable Byronic hero. There are those who do not agree with Trelawny's versions of the Byron-Shelley transactions.

As is proper, Miss Armstrong takes her hero at his own valuation, and his story loses nothing in her retelling. Unluckily, she has felt it necessary to take sides with Trelawny against

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Byron, and her portrait of the greater man is a little absurd and quite unfair. It is a little absurd to contrast Byron's "dilatoriness" and "hesitation" in Greece unfavorably with Trelawny's eagerness to be up and fighting. Trelawny was a mere swashbuckler, whereas Byron's conduct in laboring to reconcile the Greek factions and have some organization before attacking the Turks shows him in a very superior light as a born leader of men and a statesman. A small concrete example will show how Miss Armstrong misuses evidence against Byron. She says: "Byron could sneer at Shelley behind his back, he could be unutterably false to their friendship"; and cites a letter to Hoppner in proof. But what Byron actually wrote was a defense of Shelley against the prejudices of a British consular official. Here are his words:

> I regret that you have such a bad opinion of Shiloh (*i.e.*, Shelley); you used to have a good one. Surely he has talent and honor, but is crazy against religion and morality. His tragedy is sad work; but the subject renders it so. His Islam had much poetry. You seem lately to have got some notion against him.

Byron had faults, but so did Shelley; and Trelawny had plenty. There is really nothing to be gained by taking sides at this late date, and manipulating evidence.

French Sea Story

ROSE OF THE SEA. By Paul Vialar. New York: Carrick & Evans. 1940. 300 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

THIS is a sea story, reminiscent of those other vivid French sea stories of Roger Vercel's. It is characteristic that "Rose of the Sea" has a double significance; it has a symbolic meaning which becomes apparent only when the book is well advanced, while from the beginning it is the name of a freighter, a worthless hulk inherited in partnership by Jerome Jardeheu and his uncle Romain. Jerome is a young Norman seaman, inarticulate, insensitive to all but the bluntest impressions, not given to imagination or reflection; and yet, with a skill so perfect that it is apt to be overlooked, the author contrives to keep to his point of view, and yet to convey the physical action with vividness and the psychological story with subtlety.

When Jerome's villainous uncle Romain tells him that he has a cargo for the "Rose of the Sea," and gradually reveals that it is his intention to sink the ship, and the crew with her, for the sake of the insurance, it is made natural enough that Jerome should consent. We see his slow, almost bovine stages of comprehension, so that he is committed before he well understands what he is doing; we understand his detestation of his uncle, and yet his habit of dependence on him; above all, in the scenes in which he recruits the crew, we have seen how desperately near to death are the lives of these sailors, how little their lives seem worth, even to themselves. But once under way, they find on board a wretched girl who has overheard them say that their port is Constanza, in Roumania, and who has stowed away because she wants to go there, to the man whose child she bears on shipboard.

That is the complication with which the author has faced Jerome, isolated with it in the little world of the ship. And as he faces it, his very universe seems to expand around him, to enlarge itself from the brutish set of impressions and motives among which he has lived. The influence of a baby is an old one, and one easy to make sentimental and false; but here it is truly felt. It is wholly credible that these sweepings of the port should all anxiously help the woman in labor; and that they, who have found life worth so little, should be eager to bring the child into the world is an affirmation of the goodness of living. Readers who expect an ordinary sea story may be disappointed that, having established a situation of such tension, the author does not solve it with a more romantically happy ending; one half expects prodigies of valor and seamanship and a moving picture rescue. But the author is interested primarily in Jerome's acceptance of responsibility, and that he brings to its right ending. This was the last winner of the Prix Femina; and if it happens that, until God wills otherwise, this is not only *le prix dernier* but *le dernier prix*, it was well bestowed.

...Of England

By Stuart Cloete

IN spite of war, of threatened disaster, life goes on. Children play; young men and women hold hands in darkened houses; babies are born . . . old people die, while trees grow leaves, and lose them according to the seasons. The park railings are torn down, the parks cut up with trenches, but the birds still mate and sing, still rear their young. The green fields are dotted with stumps and wrecked cars, but they are still green. Church steeples still point their fingers to the skies and hold their bells silent in the lull before the storm of England, But their bells hang in their belfries, and the rivers roll under ancient bridges on their ancient beds. There are still trout in those rivers; they still lie, gently moving in the brown water as they face upstream. Butterflies still fly in the meadows, and the roads, now signless, still lead through England. The pulse of England still beats slowly; undeterred, for there are things there that cannot be destroyed. Only the bodies of free men and women can be destroyed. The bodies of free men and women easily, but not their minds which are steadfast. Nor can the sap of the broken trees be stopped from running, nor the seeds in pitted fields from germinating.

Should the dark cloud fall, should our island be destroyed there will be no finality in that destruction, for the seed of England is too widely sown, too deeply planted. The death of old England cannot destroy her spawn, nor the rasing of her monuments undo the charters of her justice.
Morituri te Salutant.

Retraction

We wish to retract and express our regret for a statement which appeared in an article entitled "Fifth Column 'Literature'," by Harold Lavine in the September 14, 1940 issue of *The Saturday Review of Literature*. In that article Philip Johnson, who is classed "as among those who have been identified, in one way or another, with fascist or quasi-fascist leanings," was referred to as "the son of the medical supplies manufacturing family." This latter reference was completely erroneous if taken to refer to Johnson & Johnson. Philip Johnson is not a member of the Johnson & Johnson family and has no connection of any sort with Johnson & Johnson.

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Historical Homesickness

RALEIGH'S EDEN. By Inglis Fletcher. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1940. 662 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

Study for mural by F. Luis Mora from "Art in Federal Buildings"

EDEN is always in the past. We live outside the gate. But in America and particularly in the American South the descriptions of splendor forever lost have in recent years multiplied at a rate which may reflect less a glory that is gone than a discontent that is here. A great many more things have gone with the wind, according to long-winded writers, than ever were up to be blown down. Mrs. Fletcher's "Raleigh's Eden" is another report out of such historical homesickness but it is also, apart from history, a lively, exciting, colorful, and crowded romantic novel of those days when America and our spirit, also, were young.

I question the veracity of the impression given by Mrs. Fletcher's history of Revolutionary days in North Carolina with ingratitude. I am one of those like her grandfather whom she quotes in her foreword as saying that as a North Carolinian he was a native of a valley of humiliation between two mountains of conceit. Virginia and South Carolina built their legends of grandeur mountain high. North Carolina was left as poor man's paradise between. Mrs. Fletcher has undertaken to revise the old topography, to bring North Carolina up to the pretensions of their pasts to grandeur, not to level all the lands off nearer to their ancient realities.

But I am entirely grateful for her story. It is alive and it moves. From foxhunt to war, by lady pirate and duel, lovely Arabian slave and towering aristocrat, great house and powdered ladies, it advances through its nearly seven hundred pages with a narrative power which can afford to be careless of history. "Careless" may be a strong word. The book is based on the contents of more than half a dozen libraries. It is so put together that some of the most apparent fiction in it is fact beyond doubting. There were rich men then as there are rich men now. They made an elegant society in the tiny tidewater towns. But the sum of the story here is excellent romanticizing.

Adam Rutledge, master of great acres, tied to a querulous invalid wife, is not only a great gentleman but an appealing hero. And Mary Warden, married to a man who might be her father, is a girl Adam could wait seven hundred pages for. Their home is Romance, not North Carolina. But Mrs. Fletcher has had the wisdom to surround them with farmers angry about taxes, mobs moving on Governor Tryon's expensive palace, slaves new out of Africa beating Africa's drums, cowards, knaves, sea-going hoodlums, dirty soldiers and bloody ones. They give a reality to her story telling which the marching in it of such personages as Cornwallis and Nathaniel Greene, John Paul Jones, Flora Macdonald, and lesser historical notables could not give it for all their actual presence in actual history. Indeed, the skill with which Mrs. Fletcher handles her minor characters, who are so often mere sticks in romantic novels, is one of the book's chief excellences. They help tie golden tidewater to its old flat earth.

It is a grand book for good reading. Historical impressions are beside the point when high romance rides swiftly in our past. Mrs. Fletcher is from California. And if her North Carolina does not go back there to Hollywood I miss my guess and Mr. Selznick his opportunity.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

FAMOUS WORDS OF FAMOUS PEOPLE

Of course you remember the immortal words from the pages of literature that are quoted below. But can you also remember who spoke them? Allow 5 points for each character you identify, and another 5 if you can also recall the title of the work in which he appears and its author. A score of 70 is par, 80 is good, 90 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 17.

1. "You mentioned your name as if I should recognize it, but beyond the obvious facts that you are a bachelor, a solicitor, a Freemason, and an asthmatic, I know nothing whatever about you."

2. "I pray thee, then, write me as one who loves his fellow men."

3. "I shouldn't be sufficiently degraded in my own estimation unless I was insulted by a very considerable bribe."

4. "To thine own self be true, and it shall follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

5. "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, results happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery."

6. "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

7. "God's in his heaven; all's right with the world."

8. "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. . . ."

9. "Everything is for the best in this best of all possible worlds."

10. "Damn the United States! I hope I may never hear of them again!"

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The Saturday Review
of Literature
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Harrison Smith
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TOM-TOM IDEALISM

WELL-MEANING writers and radio-speakers and preachers have found a theme-song for America and are putting it on the tom-tom. They say Hitler has given the German nation something to live and die for, while our ideals are as squashy as a wet bath sponge, and our patriotism might still be defined as everyone for himself and the country owes us a living. Maybe there is some truth in what they say of Americans, although such pessimism seems hysterical. But do they really want us all to unite in the fanatical support of some creed for living like National Socialism, and prepare to die for it? If so, they have read their literature and their history badly.

There is nothing more dangerous for society and a civilization than a society committed to fanaticism. Hitler knows this, and boasted of the fanaticism of his regime in his last broadcasted speech. Possibly those type fanatics, the Scandinavian berserker, the Vandals, the Mongols who destroyed the near East, the Turks who crushed Byzantine culture, the Ironsides of Cromwell, the American Abolitionists, were brooms of God, designed to sweep away crumbling institutions; yet it has never been proved that the good which resulted from their destructiveness balanced the evil, or compensated for the frightful suffering and long decline afterward resulting from wars and insurrections.

But historically speaking something of this kind always happens when a whole nation becomes indoctrinated with a ruling idea for remaking itself and the world. We do not have to accept Gibbon's belief that it was fanatical Christianity that pulled down classic civilizations, in order to be sure that a nation which believes as one man that the truth has been revealed to it alone, is a nation that will sooner or later apply crude force to demonstrate its superiority to the rest of the world. When the tom-toms have beaten long enough, and we are all sure that we are the annointed of the Lord, then look for death and destruction, first for others, later for ourselves. It was the Crusades that first broke down the morale of the Eastern cultures, and, afterwards, produced the degeneracy of the later European Middle Ages.

All of which is not to say that the United States in this difficult period is not desperately in need of the perpetration of old national ideals and the forming of new ones. But what nobler ideal has been set for any nation than the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, to which may be added faith in democracy and the will to make it work? Life must be defended, which we had almost forgot. Liberty must be safeguarded by difficult adjustments of our economic system to a new order of machines in their relation to men which was rapidly making our old *laissez-faire* as dangerous as political tyrannies. Happiness—the happiness of duty done and results achieved, as well as that which results from comfort and safety and pleasure in due ratio—is an end far more worthy and more difficult of attainment than the pitiable inflation of the ego which comes from membership in a powerful, and detested, aggressive state. And to make the American faith in democracy, which has been a kind of mysticism often in wide variance from the facts, an ideal irresistibly transforming society, a dynamic not a formula, is certainly a sufficient purpose for being an American.

But no state or creed worship will accomplish these ends in this country. They are not the products of tub thumping. We are committed to the trial and error method of individual thinking and feeling. However we have failed in practice, in theory we have exposed young Americans to all the varieties of truth that were available, thinking that only so can citizens of a democratic state learn how to function in a democracy. Tom-toms do no harm as long as they advertise this fact. The human mind must have formulas in order to feel its own thinking. But it would be far better to let our sense of national unity in a crisis grow with dangerous slowness than to get us all believing that we have no ideals worth fighting and dying for because at nine o'clock on any Monday morning we do not shout in unison "Allah is Great and Mahommed is his prophet, and that is all we know and all we need to know."

The Saturday Review asks these shouters for spiritual regimentation to take a course of quiet reading: in Thomas Jefferson, and Emerson and Thoreau and Walt Whitman, and in the speeches in the first Constitutional Convention, and in William Dean Howells, and in Mark Twain, and in Thorstein Veblen and Henry George and William Graham Sumner and William James. And among recent books it particularly recommends "The Course of American Democratic Thought," by Ralph H. Gabriel of Yale.

H. S. C.

The Old Woman with Four Sons

By Phyllis McGinley

"I HAVE had four sons," said the old woman,
"And no daughters ever.
My sons are kind men, they are kinder than common,
And tall and clever.

"They come often to visit me from the places where they live,
Restless as birds.
Their hands are full of the gifts that men like to give.
Their words are men's words.

"They say 'You-look well,' 'Do-you-need-money?,' 'The-job-is-fine.'
They chat with the neighbors.
The minds I shaped once are shaped now to a new design
By their wives or their labors.

"They do not come to my room at night, combing their hair,
When we are alone,
To share with me the secrets that women share
In heart and bone.

"Sons do not need you. They are always out of your reach,
Walking strange waters.
Their mouths are not made for small and intimate speech
Like the speech of daughters.

"The lads I bore are my sons still," said the old woman,
"Grown clever and tall.
And they are kind. Oh, they are kinder than common.
But I have no daughter at all."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

P.S. from the Translator

SIR:—I was much interested in Miss Caroline Newton's letter in the Sept. 14 issue of your paper. The translator of "Lotte In Weimar" had toyed with the idea of making an English version of the dedicatory poem; but on consultation with Dr. Mann it was decided—I think wisely—to keep to the Goethe original. However, an English version was made, a quite simple literal one, and I give it here:

Through all the bounce and blare
Of border races,
Our song makes bold to fare
Upon thy traces.
We fear not any wrong
In thee residing—
Oh, may thy life be long,
Thy realm abiding!

H. T. LOWE-PORTER.
Princeton, N. J.

Your Literary I. Q.

SIR:—May the catcher-out be caught out, for once? Or is my triumphant citation No. 1,567 of a series? Surely "Gone with the Wind" [*SRL*, Sept. 7] was not taken from Ernest Dowson's Cynara where it bears a connotation wholly different from that of the book title, but from Clarence Mangan's "Solomon where is thy throne," where it bears the same connotation. No charges.

SRL READER.

SIR:—Christopher Morley's eleventh edition of Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, page 1105, is my authority.

HOWARD COLLINS.
Monroe, Mich.

"The Negro and American Culture"

SIR:—In the fine article on "The Negro and American Culture" [*SRL*, Sept. 21], many of us miss mention of Arna Bontemps. Is it possible that Mr. Calverton is unacquainted with "Black Thunder" and "Drums at Dusk"? Mr. Bontemps's quiet good writing is not standing still, certainly. On the contrary it promises "not only lasting Negro literature, but lasting literature" from his pen. We also think that Mr. Calverton might give Langston Hughes more time before judging that his work has "stood still." After all, Mr. Hughes is still a comparatively young man. The article is exceedingly interesting and worth while.

IONE MORRISON RIDER.
Los Angeles, Cal.

Authorship of "John Brown"

SIR: — I've been working at odd spells on a piece about "John Brown's Body," the Civil War song, and the deeper I go into it the more confusing it becomes. Just now I am chasing down the claims to authorship of the song and music made by a dozen or more men—among them Thomas Brigham Bishop, to whom your contributing editor, Christopher Morley attributes the song in his "Bartlett," page 612. Now, I'm convinced that Bishop had as little to do with writing the song as he had with the composition of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus," but I do not want to pass up a bet. Perhaps Mr. Morley has some authority for the attribution that I have not seen. I know it has been a long time since he finished Bartlett, but perhaps he has kept some of the notes to which you can refer. Can you tell me, approximately at least, where he got the statement? (I have Don Seitz's story in the *New York Times*.)

"Before the author could finish the last chapter the murderer got him, too."

Mr. Robert Sherwood credited the song to Bishop ("not, as many people suppose, by Julia Ward Howe") in his published "Abe Lincoln in Illinois." In reply to an inquiry as to authority he said: "My only authority for the citation of Thomas Brigham Bishop is 'Bartlett's Familiar Quotations.'" Miss Everett wrote that she could not locate the source immediately, but would hold the inquiry as a matter of unfinished business.

Brigham made some claims to authorship of the song but, unfortunately for himself, killed his claim by making reference to his Cincinnati publisher. His song—or at least the only one I have found—was an adaptation of the song originating in Boston, was not published until December, 1861—six months after the Boston issue—and used the name of Ellsworth instead of John Brown. The Boston John Brown was simply fitted to a tune that had at least a century of use before J. B. as a drinking song, marching song, and Methodist camp meeting song — "Rest in Heaven," "Say, brothers, will you meet us," and a half a dozen other churchly laments. The Swedes were singing about Limping Lotta's Saloon to the air we know as "John Brown's Body" before 1800; the German lads, long ago, were singing "gloriglori" to the gals of sixteen, seventeen years — and twenty years ago we sang "All we do is sign the pay roll" to the same tune.

Any information you can give me will be greatly appreciated.

BOYD B. STUTLER.
American Legion Magazine,
New York City.

Bombs and Mr. Shakespeare

SIR:—Speaking of Marie Corelli: in 1907 I was associated with a production of "Macbeth" at Stratford-on-Avon. At the end of the first performance I was standing on the stage talking with our stage-manager, Alexander Stuart, and the Curator of the theatre, when our attention was drawn to a small, dumpy woman, very showily dressed, highly colored, and with hair of a hue for which nature certainly could not be held responsible. She was talking to our distinguished actor-manager, Arthur Bourchier, and, if recollection can be trusted, just about reached his elbow. I said "Who on earth is that figure of fun?" "That," replied the Curator 'is a famous novelist, Marie Corelli." After a moment of stunned silence, Stuart said "What would your townspeople do to me, if I dropped a counter-weight on her?" (A "counter-weight" being a 30-lb chunk of iron used to balance the curtain.) The curator replied "They would certainly erect a statue to you!" From which I conclude that the lady was not exactly popular in Shakespeare's town.

In the summer of that same year I was punting on the Avon with my brother, when we saw approaching surely the most incongruous sight those placid waters ever beheld. It was a Gondola! Yes! A veritable Venetian Gondola, propelled by a good-looking, but slightly self-conscious Gondolier, in a typically Comic-Opera get-up; and under a polychromatic awning in the stern sat Marie Corelli, in a flowery summer dress, smiling contemptuously at the plebian oarsmen and punters who resentfully made way for her equipage. One of these remarked bitterly as he passed us, "Why don't somebody drown it?"

Eheu fugaces: the Gondola, the Great Author and her novels—surely among the worst books ever written—have gone into the rubbish-heap of Time, and I trust that the Avon still keeps its ancient peace, unbroken by the occasional dropping of bombs, which, however, I believe the townsfolk would resent less bitterly than they did the Distinguished Novelist.

EDMOND W. RICKETT.
New York City.

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The Point's the Thing

MINORITY REPORT. By Bernard DeVoto. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1940. 346 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES

LEE was beaten at Gettysburg because he acted under a plan too ideal, Mr. DeVoto says, and because his opponent, Meade, acted by rule of thumb, meeting successive events as they came, doing the immediately expedient thing without too much schedule. The federal victory was one, too, we are given to believe, for Mr. DeVoto's Point. That is a Point against the ideal, against theories, arbitrary plans, generalizations, abstract logic, simplifications, things deduced rather than inducted. Mr. DeVoto is brilliantly persuaded to be a "pluralist, a relativist, an empiricist," and through or between his magnificent lines the absolute is lambasted as it has not been since Greek met Greek on the subject years ago.

Lee, of course, was attacking, and had to have a plan. Meade was being attacked and couldn't. Lee was being a progressive (insofar as Little Round Top was concerned) and there is no progress, naturally, without something which Mr. DeVoto recognizes perfectly even if he does not like to have it look like an ideal or an absolute. Meade, standing pat on top of the hill, required nothing better or worse than the spur of the moment. Mr. DeVoto's failure to report this distinction does not mean that he has overlooked it, for he overlooks nothing. It means rather that his Point against certain absolutes absorbs him and that a Point in favor of certain other absolutes must be left to someone else. At high school in Ogden, Utah, back in 1910, he may have been the boy on whom they called for proof that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points—for you can prove that empirically by personal walks from point to point. When it came to proof of what the square on the hypoteneuse of a right-angle triangle equals they probably called on someone else, for that is a truth which has to be deduced and is flavored, therefore, with distasteful absolutes and unempirical ideals.

Mr. DeVoto's Point makes him, like Meade at Roundtop, something of a stand-patter. It hasn't always done that to people but it does it to Mr. DeVoto. The comment is on the nature of the times, perhaps, and of modern progress. But the Point does something else for Mr. DeVoto whose benefice must be more unanimously regarded. It gives him the peg on which he hangs the most svelte and sturdy literature being written anywhere today. "Literary journalism" he calls the selected

Marshall Studio

Bernard DeVoto: Blaster of the Absolute.

contributions to *Harper's* and *The Saturday Review* which make up his new book but we day-by-day journalists who have no language of our own would call them essays.

Bernard DeVoto's world is full of a number of things, and he is very happy about them because he knows what to do. Light-footed, strong, sharp-sighted, immensely learned, primitively American, he romps through them all, and ever and anon, makes his Point. Because he has a theory against the theoretical and an ideal against the ideal the world of contemporary letters is being enriched. Because he can't endure the report that something came down from Sinai, history and science and the modern scene are coming in for fascinating comment. Because somewhere in his not-so-dim past an absolute must have hit him when he wasn't looking and an ideal must have done him wrong, there are now within Messrs. Little, Brown's covers essays which make a volume whose reading is an experience approaching in stimulation the absolute and the ideal.

John Temple Graves is a member of the editorial staff of the Birmingham, Ala., Age Herald.

Life and Fun

MR. LITTLEJOHN. By Martin Flavin. New York: Harper & Bros. 1940. 306 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

I CANNOT credit the publishers with any extraordinary perspicacity in "finding" this book because anyone who reads a dozen pages of it is certain to "find" it. And the jacket blurb, "as gay and tender and heart-warming a novel as the 1940's are apt to see," aside from the off-putting adjectives, seems ridiculously conservative to me. It is about as engaging and perceptive and humorous and amusingly philosophic as any novel I have read since "Candide" and "Tristam Shandy" and neither of those was written in the 1940's.

In short, we have fitting company here for the charming gentlemen mentioned and for Mr. Pickwick and Don Quixote and even for M. Rousseau and de Koster's "Ulenspiegel" in their lighter moments. Mr. Littlejohn belongs with the whole splendid collection of perplexed persons who simply went away from whatever they happened to be doing, because it didn't make sense, in the happy conviction that by mere physical travel one may arrive at Eden or Carcassonne or at least a few reasonable definitions.

The author provides two refrains for Mr. Littlejohn, comments of equal substance, "If life isn't *fun,* what *is* it?"

Upon being told that it *is fun* or *is not* fun, he remarks with all the profundity of a Socrates: "Hum!"

The companions of the voyage are varied but brilliantly selected for Mr. Littlejohn's research—a blind violinist who lives by the illumination of a past but perfect love; a hearty wench who communes with spirits and nearly runs Mr. Littlejohn's legs off in her attempts at less ethereal communications; a communist agitator who is always getting in fights because he is Irish and always taking a licking because he is Jewish; a Negro chicken thief who wants nothing from the world but an amiable "Cap'n"; a motion picture writer grown candid enough to be demonstrably crazy; a dog for whom life *is fun* because he has nothing to worry about but his devotions—folks and food—, and a whole museum from contemporary and timeless life.

Naturally this deserter from the tooth paste and hair tonic industry lands in a madhouse, from which he escapes, for further *fun* and *life* with his dog by the almost incredibly fairy-tale-ish device of picking his own lawyer's pocket. It doesn't hurt to give away the ending because the delight of the book is from page to page and paragraph to paragraph.

Even the italics *are fun,* but if this book gets abroad in anything like the measure its qualities deserve, one dreads to contemplate what will become of the hair-tonic, preaching, and other cosmetic industries in this country.

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Distilled Disillusion

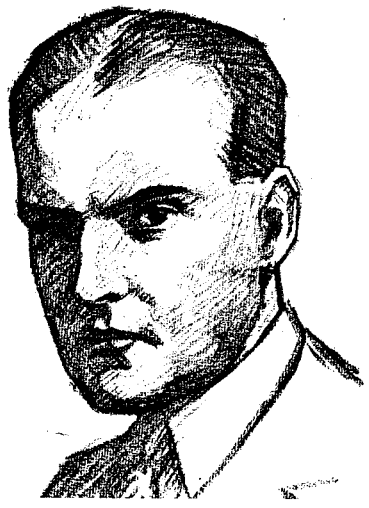
LOUIS HACKER

EDMUND WILSON, our foremost literary critic, has the courage of his intellectual interests. A number of years ago—before the Moscow purges got in their deadly work, to disillusion many in the Marxian dream—Mr. Wilson sat down to study the history of communism. Certainly up to 1936, communism held the key to the resolution of our present-day dilemmas for a great many thinkers and moralists and up to August, 1939, for a remnant of diehards. Capitalism, after its fine functional achievements of the nineteenth century, had run its progressive course; flying the banners of liberty and democracy, creating a mighty mechanism for wresting abundance from nature, opening up the whole world to the strivings of men, it had brought with it, nevertheless, war, periodic breakdown in the economic processes, and—worst of all—such a universal despair that peoples everywhere were eagerly grasping at false moralities in their desperate hunt for salvation.

Small wonder that the ideas of communism and the vision of a new society attracted new supporters. Human history, previously, had seen similar unrest and activity on the part of intellectuals. Erasmus and Rabelais, within the body of Catholic Europe, by their uncertainties, doubts, and challengings, had prepared the way for the Protestant Reformation and the smashing of the sacramental system as the sole instrument for achieving grace. Later, Locke the Englishman, Vico the Italian, and Voltaire the Frenchman had unleashed forces which were to thunder on until the French Revolution freed men's minds from the authoritarianism of the absolutist state.

So it was with our own generation. And Mr. Wilson, whose interests previously had been with esthetic matters, began his education in the realms of communist theory and politics, because communism (so it seemed) stood in the same relation to our modern perplexities and needs as had the humanism of the Renaissance and the rationalism of the Enlightenment to their bewildered epochs. Communism was to be the mighty instrument to free the hearts and spirits of men.

"To the Finland Station"* is the result of that process in self-education undertaken by Mr. Wilson. In a sense, but even here only obliquely, the author admits the partial failure of the experiment. In a few illuminating passages toward the end of the book, he pays his compliments to and expresses his abhorrence of Trotsky's morality: and in so doing he permits the inference that he has rejected the political methods of communism because they end in moral bankruptcy. Earlier in the book, although at greater length, Mr. Wilson has questioned the so-called scientific foundations of communism, that is to say, dialectics and the theory of surplus value. Mr. Wilson, in fine, ends up by being no communist; one may assume, however, that he still believes in socialism, or the coöperative society or democratic collectivism.



Drawing by Roy C. Gamble

Edmund Wilson "has carried through his process of self-education austerely."

BUT the resolution of this debate, which has stimulated the minds of thousands of thoughtful persons during the past decade, is not the purpose of this book. "To the Finland Station" is an examination, in terms of the thinking and doing of its leading protagonists and antagonists, of the development of the theory and politics of communism; that is to say, the seizure of political power by the proletariat because the logic of history made that class its agent in the interests of the creation of a classless society in which production was to be based on social need instead of human exploitation. Mr. Wilson does not complete the story. He ends it with 1917, with the arrival of Lenin in Petrograd at the Finland Station; hence the book's title.

Mr. Wilson has carried through his process of self-education austerely, and we are in his debt as a result. All intelligent persons will want to read his book not only because it represents Mr. Wilson at his best but equally because it is the most discerning guide to the faith and vision of communism that we have. It is informative and wise and understanding; it is not didactic nor polemical nor ill-natured. In its pages Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky—and indeed a whole host of lesser though no less turbulent figures, Owen, Lassalle, Bakunin—come alive as sensible and sentient men. In short, the book is a notable achievement in collective biography and intellectual history.

The book's design is somewhat complex. The theory and politics of communism had an elaborate preparation in the agonies and thinking of eighteenth—and nineteenth—century Europe. It is enough to mention the outstanding of these forces: the rationalism of the Enlightenment; the egalitarianism of the French Revolution; the natural law of English classical economy; the direct-action tactics of Babeaux, and the left-wing English Chartists; the fine humanity of the English and French Utopians; the trade unionism of Lassalle, the anarchism of Bakunin; and always and persistently the Hegelian logic. Mr. Wilson has studied these influences and has used these materials with great skill to create a rich background against which the founders of communism enact their roles. Marx and Engels and Lenin and Trotsky are the chief characters in a great drama in which, as Mr. Wilson says, they "are trying to make the historical imagination intervene in human affairs as a direct constructive force."

So much for the general intention of the book. The method employed is also somewhat complex: at any rate, this is true of its first third. Mr. Wilson calls the device he uses the "spotlighting method," that is to say, his imagination and intelligence pick out outstanding individuals whose thinking and careers bring into sharp focus the prevailing tendencies of their times. The aspirations of the Enlightenment are presented in terms of Vico's vision that "the social world is certainly the work of man." The lift that the French Revolution gave to men's hearts is presented in terms of

**TO THE FINLAND STATION. A Study in the Writing and Acting of History. By Edmund Wilson. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1940. 509 pp. $4.*

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the work of the French historian Michelet, while the decline and degradation of that tradition is set out in terms of the timidities of Renan, Taine, and France. Utopianism, in all its brave and foolish manifestations, is presented in terms of the dreams and failures of Saint-Simon, Fowner, Owen, and Enfantin.

So much for a past of the preliminaries. Now enter Marx and Engels; and when their roles are played out, Lenin and Trotsky. The major portion of the book is given over, naturally, to the lives of the founders. This is understanding and yet critical. Refusing to be impressed by the ponderous body of official exegesis, Mr. Wilson has examined the doctrine for himself; and he ends by rejecting both of the "scientific" props of Marxism: dialectical materialism and the theory of surplus value. No trained economist himself, he has relatively little to say of the latter, accepting simply the position of most competent economists that the whole theory is incapable of objective proof or indeed logical demonstrations. In connections with the dialectic, Mr. Wilson is on surer ground; and he again and again demonstrates the mythological characteristics of the Hegelian logic of History.

Having disposed of these two mechanical and deterministic aspects of "Scientific Socialism," Mr. Wilson proceeds to his analysis of the politics of communism. Here he is excellent. He follows Marx and Engels through their devious maneuverings, their hopes and their quarrels with their enemies. He shows how the grim weapon of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was forged. In Lenin he finds pure politics in action. Nothing is more illuminating than this:

> If his (Lenin's) controversial writings are usually dull to read, it is because the issues involved are not really being fought out by Lenin in terms of ideas at all. These issues are not—though Lenin thinks they are—really questions of Marxist theory. They are invariably questions of practical policy; and his real aim is not to justify theoretically the policy that he feels is the right one, but simply to make people pursue it. The theoretical side of Lenin is, in a sense, not serious. . . . He sees and adopts his tactic with no regard for the theoretical positions of others or of his own theoretical position in the past; then he supports it with Marxist texts.

If Marxist science is a myth, if the politics of Marxism-Leninism leads to the totalitarianism of Stalin, what is left? The vision of socialism: which does not need a dubious "science" to sustain it but which at the present is surely in need of a politics to make possible the realization, peaceably, of the dream of all the men of good will who have contributed to its tradition.

Testament of Faith

GROWING PAINS. By Wanda Gág. New York: Coward-McCann. 1940. 468 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by FRANCES SMYTH

"ART for Art's sake," Wanda Gág wrote in her diary in October, 1914, "gives me a pain. No one will ever get anywhere with that motto. I am using my life for Art's sake only as far as using, in turn Art for Life's sake. That is, I am using Life for life, but Art as a medium or tool."

Other twenty-one year old art students have without doubt made similar statements, either for artistic reasons or because of something they had read somewhere. To Wanda Gág the statement was a statement of fact, made because she meant it, always had meant it, and intended sticking to it. Such unwavering sureness of intention, so clear a perception of one's goal, such a matter-of-fact recognition of one's function in life can lead to one end only. Today Wanda Gág is one of America's outstanding printmakers; her stories and drawings have enriched the field of children's literature; she has done what she knew she had to do and what she said she would do. And "Growing Pains," a transcript of the diaries she kept from the age of fifteen to twenty-four, makes it easy to understand this achievement.

In "Everybody's Autobiography," Gertrude Stein remarks that people who decide to become artists generally discover that they had unhappy childhoods. Wanda Gág never made this discovery, possibly because of having been born an artist. When she was fifteen her father died and there was scarcely any money to keep her mother and the seven children in the big house in New Ulm, Minnesota. So Wanda painted post-cards and place-cards, sold stories and poems and drawings to children's magazines, sawed wood, cleaned house, washed and ironed, took care of the younger children, wished for a new tam, a gymnasium suit, fresh butter, drawing paper, and india ink—and wrote in her diary every evening the new words the baby could say, her delight in being able to continue high school, her sisters' efforts in art and letters, her opinions of her teachers and their tricks of gestures. Sometimes she stayed home from school because of "not having a decent dress to wear"; quite often she cried because "everything went crooked." But despite these privations and the fatiguing responsibilities the youngster bore, these pages reflect no dark frustrations, no misery of spirit, no unhappy childhood. They breathe serenity and joy, love for her little sisters and brother, love for her friends, excitement in drawing and in study, pleasure (never shame or embarrassment) in the kindness and generosity of neighbors. Life was not all washing and ironing; it was piano duets and dressing up as an Indian maid and Talking about Life. Most importantly, on all sides there was encouragement of her talent, and this encouragement presently took practical form and Wanda was packed off to Art School in St. Paul.

Self-portrait on brown wrapping paper.
Wanda Gág

For the next seven years Wanda and her diaries are concerned with art school and herself. She became, as her friends charged, an extremely introspective young woman, tirelessly analyzing her thoughts, her moods, and her emotions. All the while of course she was hard at work learning, trying to rid herself of cleverness and superficiality and, at the same time, master the fundamentals of her craft. Occasionally she wondered if she would ever do what she had it in her to do, but that she had it in her she never doubted: "that I have *stuff* I know, the question is will I be able to get it out." These qualms were rare, however, and when, in 1917, as the winner of an Art Students' League scholarship, she started for New York with her fellow students Adolph Dehn and Arnold Blanch, the way ahead, though steep, was clear.

These diaries are remarkable for many reasons, for their lively style, for their "documentary" value, for their droll appraisals. They are chiefly memorable, however, as a joyful testament of faith.

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Sir Galahad in China

TWIN STARS OF CHINA. By Evans Fordyce Carlson. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1940. 331 *pp., with index.* $3.

Reviewed by FREDA UTLEY

ONE July evening in 1938, on my return to Hankow from a visit to the Yangtze front, I strolled over to the Navy Y.M.C.A. garden restaurant where the foreign newspapermen always gathered at the end of the day to discuss the war news and to gossip. Durdin of the *New York Times* hailed me and took me over to meet Captain (now Major) Evans Carlson of the United States Marines, just back from the second of his long treks with the Chinese Eighth Route Army in the North West. I had, of course, heard of Carlson weeks before as the American officer who was so physically hardy as well of such an adventurous disposition as to march his forty miles a day over mountains and hills with the Chinese soldiers, subsisting on their diet of millet, speaking Chinese, and ready to stretch the conception of a foreign military observer's duties to the point of accompanying Chinese guerilla forces into Japanese occupied territory.

Dressed in shorts, marching boots, and an old khaki shirt, he spent a few weeks in Hankow interviewing the great and attending government receptions, Embassy functions, and press conferences with complete unself-consciousness and the dignity which goes with it. Then having been reprimanded by the Navy Department for his outspoken newspaper interviews in which he gave warm praise to the "pattern of resistance" adopted by the ex-Red Armies of China, he chose to resign his commission, sacrificing the pension due to him for twenty-two year's service in order to be able to speak his mind freely and give all aid to China.

Major Carlson is fundamentally a religious type, as is obvious from reading his book. To Major Carlson, both the Chinese Communists and some of their bitterest enemies are all Christians at heart, and although his sympathies are obviously with the Chinese Communists, he strives to believe that the New Life Movement, the Kuomintang, Chiang Kai-shek and his wife, and even bankers like Dr. Kung and some ex-war lords are all men of good will and strong faith. It is true that a war of national liberation such as China is waging does unite the whole people, but it is also essential to recognize that the struggle between groups, the failure of the government to institute agrarian reprieves, and its fear of "mobilizing the people," do seriously hamper China's war effort. Much more than the "formula," which is all that Carlson appears to think necessary, will be required to enable the Communists and the Kuomintang to work harmoniously together after the war, unless one is completely subordinated to the other.

Carlson's view of the Chinese Communists is expressed in part:

> In Shansi I had been so impressed by the similarity between the doctrines I saw being practised by the Eighth Route Army and the people and the doctrines of Christ that when I prepared for the present trip I selected a pocket volume of the New Testament with a view to reading the four gospels systematically and comparing Christ's doctrines with what I saw being applied around me.

His apparently complete ignorance of the past history of the Chinese Communists, or of Marxist doctrine as interpreted either by Stalin or Trotsky and Lenin, combined with the general naivete of his political judgments, leads him so far astray that he actually calls Mao Tse-tung (the Chinese Communist leader) the fountain head of liberalism in China, the man who has "provided the foundation for China's modern liberal thought." It would be far truer to say that circumstances by 1935 had driven the Chinese Communists to abandon class and civil war and to identify their Party and their aims with the liberal cause in China, thereby rallying to their support the most progressive and patriotic forces in the country. Carlson never even mentions the Comintern nor Trotskyism and one would never guess from reading his book that the Chinese Communists, like other sections of the Comintern, had once stood for a "dictatorship of the workers and peasants." The split in 1927 between the Communists and Chiang Kai-shek is oversimplified to the point of historical inaccuracy, the role of the Comintern being ignored, the fundamental differences in aim of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party glossed over, and the Chinese Communists represented as innocents.

The danger of such trusting acceptance of present Communist policy in China at its face value is that it ignores the danger of an abrupt break with Chiang Kai-shek and the abandonment by the Chinese Communist leaders of the national struggle for renewed class struggle and civil war, should Russo-Japanese relations suffer a sea change comparable to that which Russo-German relations underwent in August 1939.

Nevertheless there is great value in Major Carlson's testimony concerning the reality of the democratic, agrarian, social, and political reforms carried out by the Chinese Communists in the North West and in so-called Japanese occupied territory, and in particular concerning the close coöperation between the army and the peasants which he personally witnessed. It is a pity that his painstaking style of writing and the overloading of his narrative with unnecessary detail somewhat obscures the exciting narrative.

Major Carlson's military judgments would appear to be as penetrating and revealing as his political judgments are naive. His evidence goes far to explain why it is that China, long thought of as the least warlike, the least united, and the most corrupt of the nations, is still resisting Japan's military machine after more than three years of devastating war, whereas Poland has disappeared from the map, and France, Belgium, Holland and Norway all succumbed within a few weeks or months to Germany.

Freda Utley, who spent several years in the Far East as war correspondent, is the author of "China at War," and the recently-published "The Dream We Lost."

Five young Chinese who accompanied the author on his last trip through North China.

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Gadgets and Society

ENGINES OF DEMOCRACY: INVENTIONS AND SOCIETY IN MATURE AMERICA. By Roger Burlingame. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1940. 606 *pp., ill., with index.* $3.75.

Reviewed by PAUL BIXLER

THIS is an intelligent book about the technics of the recent past. The popular idolatry and mythology which so frequently shroud the truth about invention have been skillfully stripped away. Missing also are the half-baked comments of the popularizer. And as if such negative virtues were not enough, the whole text is shot through with social criticism of a reasonably high level of thoughtfulness.

Offhand one would say that such a clearing of the misty atmosphere, long overdue, could not be accomplished except by scholarly dullness, reformism, or debunking. But I believe the job has been so managed. It comes off because the author happens to be a novelist of attainments and because, taking his subject with great seriousness and a high sense of social values, he raises it to the plane of readable history. Even more than its complementary predecessor ("The March of the Iron Men," a narrative of American invention up to the time of the Civil War), "Engines of Democracy" has something to say to critics of modern culture. But I like to believe that the book will get in its best licks if it is placed in the hands of the more mature members of the luncheon clubs—or more broadly, any American male who likes his gadgets.

Possibly because our writers on popular science are neither politically nor historically sophisticated and because our historians are prone to slight the advance of the manipulative and the inventive, it becomes an invigorating experience to view recent cultural progress in America from the plateau of technology. Novelist Burlingame lays the foundation of his history upon the individualism of the frontier and the breadth of our geography. To this he applies the great fact of mass production, which arrived in a still fluid America and thus contributed to democracy. Finally refreshing, then, becomes his use of the word "invention," which he broadens till it appears to be a way of thought. If our cultural notions about the machine and our social lag stand in the way of progress, he asks, why not apply to them the brilliant methods of technology? Let's invent our way to a new society, for after all (so goes his catch phrase) "the proper study of the machine is man."

Unless I grossly misunderstand Mr. Burlingame, his conclusions lead to economic planning of a far-reaching order, and they imply isolationism and a number of other ideas elsewhere set down and elaborated by Stuart Chase. The method of his arrival at such conclusions, then, may be more unusual than the conclusions themselves.

I should like to say something about effective organization, the grouping of technical developments by logical steps, and the subordination of the most entertaining details about gadgets to their social implications. It would be misleading, however, to neglect entirely the brilliant treatment of individual inventive processes, since if this were weak no amount of sound social criticism could save the book. Choosing the highlights is not easy. Some will no doubt prefer the chapter on light, in which Thomas Edison appears less inhuman than usual and a man very much of his own time. Others will take the several parts dealing with communications since they lend themselves so well to subtle and human overtones. For myself I shall gladly settle on the story of J. W. Paige's leviathan for distributing, setting, and justifying type or on the exegisis of organic chemistry. With the latter, to my mind, Mr. Burlingame's own inventive skill reaches its apogee.

A liberal number of illustrations assist the text although a few, in the earlier pages, reproduce on so small a scale as to be annoying rather than helpful.

He Stayed in Boston

I SPEAK FOR MYSELF. By Edwin Francis Edgett. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1940. 385 *pp., with index.* $3.

Reviewed by JAMES HILTON SMYTH

IT was in December, 1894, that Edwin Francis Edgett moved into the editorial offices of *The Boston Transcript,* first as dramatic critic and later, after a year in London at the turn of the century, as literary editor. And there, for over four decades, he remained. During this time the twilight of Bostonian—and New England—culture set in; one by one the important magazines and publishing houses moved to New York; the rich literary traditions of the earlier half of the nineteenth century became a memory rather than a heritage.

One looks in vain for an account, a record of this period in Mr. Edgett's autobiography. It is not there. Nor is there present within the pages of "I Speak for Myself" any indication that there was any literary growth or vitality whatsoever in Boston during those years. The book moves smoothly on, concerned mainly with minor recollections of actors and writers of passing prominence.

Edwin Francis Edgett

In time this lack of form and substance gains a certain significance. For Mr. Edgett has written honestly, and as a result his book is not alone an autobiography, but is as well a highly revealing account of one of the reasons for Boston's literary doldrums. When reading the history of Mr. Edgett's forty-odd years as literary editor of *The Boston Transcript,* it is pertinent to remember that during most of this period the *Transcript* was the sole literary guide-post for innumerable New Englanders.

Mr. Edgett preferred Kathleen Norris to Joseph Conrad, A. S. M. Hutchinson to Louis Bromfield. More significant, perhaps, are the writers he ignores in his book, although they certainly made an impression at various times on the Boston censors and presumably news of the literary wars must have seeped through the musty hallways of the old *Transcript* building. But no mention is made of James Branch Cabell, or Dreiser, or Sherwood Anderson, or Hemingway, or Faulkner, or any of the rest of the long list whose works were temporarily banned.

The majority of readers who have come of age since the early twenties will unfortunately find little of interest in Mr. Edgett's book. For the more mature, particularly those curious as to the whys and wherefores of New England's literary sterility, "I Speak for Myself" is by way of being a self-explanatory document.

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I'M A LITERARY SHARECROPPER

(*Continued from page 4*)

Bureau of Internal Revenue as Form 1040A.

These advantages of the literary sharecropper's life are of course not enjoyed by the cotton sharecropper. But Heavy Duty and his millions of black and white fellows have an inestimable advantage which the literary sharecroppers do not enjoy. They may be inarticulate but a highly articulate press constantly speaks for them; they are the darlings of myriads of sociologists, reformers, and discontented elderly women suffering from high blood pressure. The literary sharecropper has no champion. The man farthest down in American life is the man who has nobody to speak for him and to that lowly estate has the literary sharecropper fallen. Year in and year out he works on the same terms, his belt drawing ever nearer to his backbone, while he prays that his work will be noticed not by the Pulitzer Prize Committee but by Sam Goldwyn. When he goes to New York in the day coach to consult his publishers he is sometimes invited to cocktail parties where he drinks so much free liquor and eats so many free canapés to supplement his meager rations that he has no time to talk and is consequently put down as a dull fellow who will never again be invited. Or he is asked by his boss-man publisher—and this is a grave mistake because the writer then sees how the other half live—to lunch at the Plaza or Jack and Charlie's where the rich authors who work for the movies, eat. Here the author's next book is tied up while he revels in a dream-world of unaccustomed vittles; he gets another advance to enable him to live while finishing his job; and soon finds himself once more close to his material in the day coach homeward bound.

I used to think sometimes, that I'd go back to my old job of traveling salesman selling luggage and pioneering, as our sales manager told us, "on the frontiers of service." But I have rejected the notion. Writers write for more esoteric reasons than earning a livelihood; my beneficent magazine friends who bought my short story could have told me that. And Heavy Duty, as any columnist can tell you, doesn't farm to make money: he does it to have a way of life. The country needs both beauty and cotton; we are essential to society; and the knowledge that we are serving is enough. But even so, my feet, like Heavy Duty's feet, began to itch. I might find me a better boss-man up the road. Well, I've found him and I expect to stay on his plantation a long time. Heavy Duty has a new home and so have I. We're both happy nowadays and expect to eat sardines and oranges this years long before Christmas. And so I go blithely around these days singing a verse from one of his songs:

It ain't no use for to work so hard,
I got a gal in de white folks' yard,
She gives me biscuits an' she gives me lard,
If hit wasn't for de bulldog I'd walk in de yard.
He's spot'tin'
We shall be free.
An' de good Lawd shall set us free.

I know now that I'm a literary sharecropper for life.

David L. Cohn is the author of "The Good Old Days," "God Shakes Creation" and "Picking America's Pockets."

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

Subscription, $4 a year, $7 for two years. Additional postage in Canada and all other foreign countries: $1 a year. At least 3 weeks' notice is required for changes of address, which are best sent directly to the publisher. Both the old and the new addresses must be given. Back issues of The Saturday Review are available at the following rates: 1 month, 15c each; 1 month to 6 months, 30c each; 6 months to 1 year, 60c each; 1 year to 5 years, $1 each; over 5 years, address the publishers. The Saturday Review is indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature."

Exiled Writers's Dinner

A committee of prominent publishers headed by Cass Canfield, President of *Harpers*, is arranging a dinner at the Hotel Commodore October 17th for the aid of exiled anti-Nazi writers in Europe, at which Clifton Fadiman will be toast-master.

The specific purpose of the Committee of Publishers is to save from danger some 20 exiled anti-Nazi writers under constant threat of seizure by the Gestapo. Some of the group for whom aid is sought are in concentration camps in the unoccupied zones in France. Others are at large and without food, money or shelter in both the occupied and unoccupied zones.

Among the prominent writers who will address the guests are Pearl Buck, Edna Ferber, Jules Romains, Genevieve Tabouis. The other members of the Committee of Publishers are Louis Birk, of Modern Age Books; George R. Brett, Jr., of Macmillan Co.; Whit Burnett, of Story Magazine; Bennet Cerf, of Random House; Nelson Doubleday, of Doubleday Doran; Ralph Ross, of McGraw Hill; and B. W. Heubsch, of Viking Press. Funds raised at the dinner will be administered with the approval of the Committee of Publishers through the Exiled Writers's Committee of the League of American Writers.

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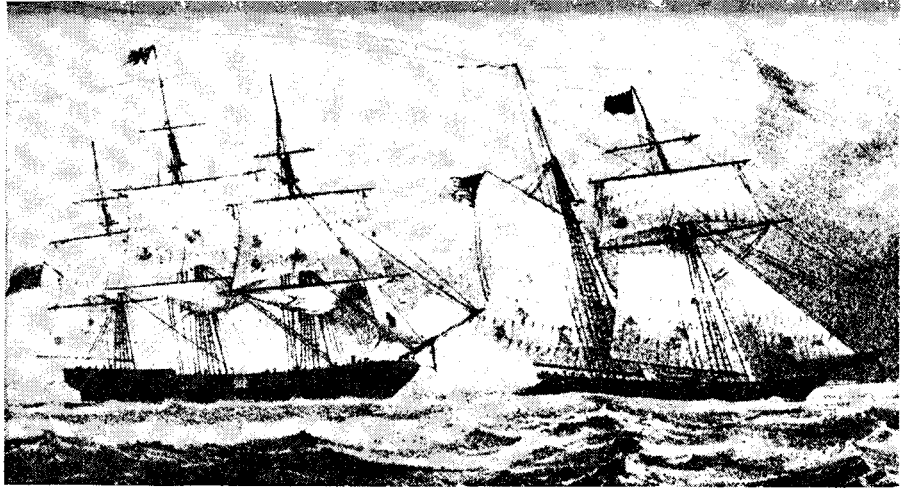

Battle between the *Rossie* and the *Princess Amelia*, September 16, 1812.

Maryland Sea-Squire

SAILOR OF FORTUNE. By Hulbert Footner. New York: Harper & Bros. 1940. 323 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

THIS book may be called the product of a peculiarly fortunate conjunction of circumstances. If ever a memory cried aloud for a first-class biography it has been that of the Maryland sea-squire, Joshua Barney. At sixteen he was already in command of his own ship and engaged in a complex intrigue with the court of Savoy. He was one of the first officers of the Revolutionary Navy, and one of three (with Barry and John Paul Jones) who captured a British warship in level battle, and who survived the war with reputation enhanced.

He was one of the most celebrated of privateersmen, both in the Revolution and in 1812; his *Rossie* bore commission No. 1 in the latter war, was something like the prototype of all the great Baltimore privateer clippers, and captured a King's ship. He commanded a squadron of frigates for Napoleon; he made an escape from a British prison as thrilling as Casanova's adventure on the leads, and topped it off by an adventure with a mysterious and beautiful lady. He knew Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, Madison; he held political office in Baltimore; he commanded a Marine Brigade whose performance is the only thing Americans like to remember about the Battle of Bladensburg. Best of all he had a good eye and the patience to set down or to tell everything he observed.

In short he lived a picaresque novel with footnotes from history. The fortunate coincidence is that Hulbert Footner has chosen to tell the story for the first time since Barney's daughter-in-law wrapped it in high-faluting Sir Walter Scottish language in 1832. For Mr. Footner is himself a Baltimorean, without which he could hardly have understood the background, and is the author of some of the best adventure-detective fiction now in print, without which he would surely have failed in bringing the foreground to life.

He has approached the task in all humility as a non-professional biographer, assembling an immense amount of information from obscure sources. This much is according to union rules and perhaps was done under professional advice; but having gone so far, Mr. Footner's training in the school of literature that must keep moving or be lost asserts itself, and he ramps out of the usual bounds. He gingers up his narrative with anecdotes; he uses direct quotations that cannot possibly have been set down at the time; he omits facts unless they have narrative importance or develop his man's character; he abjures footnotes.

The result is at once one of the liveliest and most accurate biographies of the year.

Gallic Dreamer

CLAUDE DEBUSSY, MASTER OF DREAMS. By Maurice Dumesnil. New York: Ives Washburn. 1940. 326 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by KATHARINE SCHERMAN

WITH an intense, emotional loyalty which was the prime motive of his creative instinct, Claude Achille Debussy sought to express the Gallic spirit freely and directly through his music. He had no regard for the tradition-bound members of the *Institut,* who were the leaders of French music, nor for the strict rules with which they attempted to regulate his composing under their tutelage. Yet Debussy, although he sometimes said that no one could "learn" music, grudgingly admitted that he must have learned something from his ten years under their care.

Debussy was so intensely Parisian that he never could stay away from Paris long. He threw up the Prix de Rome after a few months' sojourn in the Villa Medici, because of his longing for the Paris boulevards. The book is filled with gay and charming descriptions of Paris cafés, of Claude's favorite sweet shops, of the sociable pharmacy where he met Lily Texier, who became his first wife, of the suburbs and parks where he spent his Sundays, walking and dreaming.

Dumesnil presents a picture of Debussy as headstrong, impulsive, absolutely sure of his own musical genius; yet morbidly moody and sensitive to the adverse judgments of the critics on his music. Whatever he did he created around himself a storm of controversy. This was partly due to his own character, for he boldly asserted himself against both friends and enemies, in an impulsive manner which might have seemed selfish, were it not for his affectionate nature and natural generosity. In his life, as in his music, he allowed himself to be bound by no ties of conventionality.

The style of Mr. Dumesnil's book is not conspicuous. The biography is a fair, honest, complete one, simply and directly written. It consists, besides the bare facts of Debussy's life, of anecdotes which illustrate the composer's character, conversations, a few quotations from letters, and brief descriptions of the musical trends which existed during the time in which Debussy wrote. In short, the author does not bring himself into the story at all —he is a fair, objective biographer. The musician, Claude Debussy, appears before us with photographic accuracy, and we can much better understand his music when we see the man who created it.

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The Thinking Mask

THE SPIRIT OF MOLIÈRE. By Percy Chapman. Princeton University Press. 1940. 250 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by GILBERT HIGHET

LIKE all great comedians, Molière found it difficult to continue being merely funny. The bright stream of his humor flowed on, but, as its channel deepened, there were cold current and dark gleams beneath the surface. So Aristophanes's last plays, written after the Athenian defeat, are plaintive half-allegorical fantasies which he vainly tries to enliven by jokes which he himself knows are unsuccessful—it is embarrassing to read them. Shakespeare's last "comedies" are very far from being funny. We laugh at drunken Stephano, but he is always too near Caliban for us to forget ourselves in laughter.

Molière started in the simplest, hardest school. After a failure in Paris, he began his double profession of actor-playwright in the "sticks," by writing and playing one-act farces, in which he approached the clown as closely as possible by wearing a funny mask. It was that training that made him a comedian (his only heroic play failed, and was converted into a comedy), and kept him a comedian till the end (on the day he died he was clowning his death-spasms). The actor of farce has only one aim. He must make the customers laugh without stopping. So he must combine great economy of words and action with great fertility of invention. These early farces were not unlike the first Chaplin comedies—the American *commedia dell' arte:* improvisations by a few set figures around a familiar helpless character baffled by a new situation. Thus, Molière introduced himself to the King in a farce called "The Professor in Love." Another such was "Elmer at College"—about the agonies of a yokel striving for education. The farces of the Romans had the same kind of recurrent buffoon caught in the machinery—"Pappy Buys a Farm," "Bigmouth Joins the Gladiators"; so had the first Chaplins—"The Fireman," "The Convict," and so on.

Molière never really abandoned that attitude to life and the stage. His greatest play, "Le Misanthrope," is simply a string of painful situations, not very closely connected, which embarrass poor Alceste more and more frightfully until he rushes off-stage in despair. If we see him as Hamlet struggling with an impure world, the play is a tragedy manquée. If we see him as a likable but shockingly inadequate man ruining his chances by his own folly, the play is a searchingly witty comedy. Only—Alceste is more a misguided man than a clown. Tartuffe is more a wicked man than a clown. Although Molière never stopped playing for the laughs, the central clown-figure and his torturing situations grew, each of them, more like humanity and real life—at which we can never laugh whole-heartedly.

These remarks are suggested by the new book on Molière, which Mr. Bédé has edited after its author's death. "The Spirit of Molière" contains much wise reflection on that admirable playwright, too little understood outside France. Structurally, it suffers greatly from Chapman's premature death: it tails off towards the end, there are several inconsistencies and dropped threads, and there ought certainly to have been an index. But these faults do not spoil the wealth of the book: it is full of rich ore and unsuspected treasures—the best memorial to its author, and to Molière himself.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Sherlock Holmes, in The Adventure of the Norwood Builder, from *The Return of Sherlock Holmes,* by Conan Doyle.
2. *Abou Ben Adhem,* by Leigh Hunt.
3. Pooh-Bah, in *The Mikado,* by W. S. Gilbert.
4. Polonius, in *Hamlet,* by Shakespeare.
5. Wilkins Micawber, in *David Copperfield,* by Dickens.
6. Humpty Dumpty, in *Through the Looking Glass,* by Lewis Carroll.
7. Pippa, in *Pippa Passes,* by Robert Browning.
8. Jacques, in *As You Like It,* by Shakespeare.
9. Dr. Pangloss, in *Candide,* by Voltaire.
10. Philip Nolan, in *The Man Without A Country,* by Edward Everett Hale.

America South

THE PAN AMERICAN HIGHWAY from the Rio Grande to the Canal Zone. By Harry A. Franck and Herbert C. Lanks. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 1940. 249 *pp., with index.* $5.

Reviewed by CARLETON BEALS

IN a previous story, "Sky Roaming above Two Continents," Mr. Franck, who has tramped more widely over the inaccessible parts of the globe than perhaps any other American, succumbed to the lure of Pan-American Airways; and in this volume, he succumbs to the lure of the motor-car—except for those uncompleted stretches of the highway. In this account he waves a hand of gratitude at the humble Indian, "just such swarthy little men in big straw sombreros . . . as you see along the finished highway today," whose primitive toil has made it possible to travel in comfort rapidly over one of the finest and most scenic roads in the world.

But if the motor car and a remarkably well-built road imposed some limits on Franck's customary wide-ranging curiosity, it is a long, long way from Laredo to Panama, about as far as from Boston to San Francisco, and it traverses seven countries, each of them, as the author points out, unique in its natural characteristics, personality, and way of life. Five of his previous twenty-seven books deal with Panama, Central America, or Mexico, one of them dating back to days long ago when he was Canal Zone policeman 88, so that here we also get the benefit

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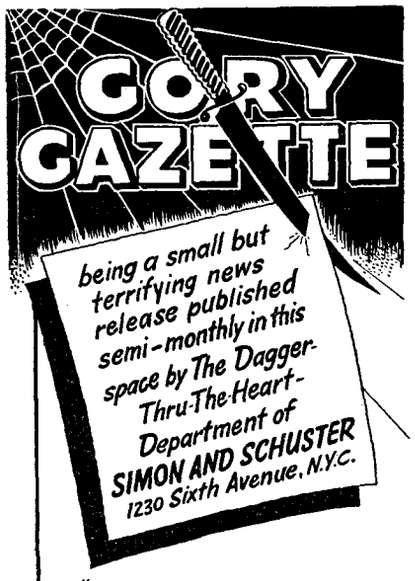
GORY
GAZETTE
being a small but terrifying news release published semi-monthly in this space by The Dagger-Thru-The-Heart-Department of
SIMON AND SCHUSTER
1230 Sixth Avenue, N.Y.C.

The Gory Gazette is a paper for people who shudder. It will be entirely about Inner Sanctum Mysteries, which have been appearing with fits and starts (our editorial fits, reader's starts) for the past few years now. It will be uncompromising in printing no advertising but its own. And it will appear in this space twice a month.

Here's why. We (or I, if you're going to quibble) are Simon and Schuster's No. 1 murder aficionado. Armed with Sales Charts and a blunt instrument, we recently went into a huddle with other members of the Dagger-Thru-the-Heart Department. We discovered that, while we'd published a couple of plugs (publishing term for palooka), the Past Performance charts showed that Our Public had given us the nod and was asking for more of the same brand of sudden death.

So we said we'd publish one Inner Sanctum Mystery a month. We said we'd get a new trademark (note the Perfect Mystery Fan below). And that we'd talk about ourselves in a semi-monthly column. Q.E.D.—*The Gory Gazette.*

All right — *The Gory Gazette's* first beat — guaranteed to be covered by no other advertising column — is *The Goose Is Cooked* by EMMETT HOGARTH ($2).

It's the first of the Inner Sanctum Mysteries of the Month. It's so far been greeted by

1. BRENTANO'S, who have selected it as their own Mystery of the Month, hand-picked from the September crime crop, and to be featured in all their branches.

2. GEORGE ROSS of the *World Telegram*, who says: "Our hat's off to *The Goose Is Cooked* for spine-chilling from between book covers."

Mystery fans will get none of the Whos, Whys, Whens, and Where's of the plot from *The Gory Gazette.* But it would be a crime in itself not to tell you—read *The Goose Is Cooked.*

The second Friday every month is Inner Sanctum Mystery Day

of his previous roamings and first-hand information about the ways of the people.

Mr. Franck does not stray far from the things that would interest the average tourist. He gives more attention to the bull-ring and *jai-alai* games than to the frescoes of Diego Rivera, who rates two sentences; those of Clemente Orozco are not even mentioned. But what makes this book something more than the useful tourist guide, is the author's keen eye for the warm flow of life, its pageantry, color, and novelty. Franck is fascinated by mountains and rivers, the rich savor of rain on the desert, by plants and animals and birds, and above all by human beings. They can be as primitive and ragged as the Otomi Indians or as modern as an engineer, but the author is too interested in their creative tasks, in what they eat and wear, what they are doing, why and how, to be bothered about race or class prejudices.

Mostly his book is one of surface impressions, with flashes of good humor, of historical perspective, and all is told with sympathy and tolerance. He gets in a good word about Mexico's new efforts in building schools, a dig at politicians desecrating the beauties of the landscape with campaign billboards, and finds the Jim Crowism of the Canal Zone, with its signs for "Gold" employees and "Silver" employees, "a class distinction at variance with American ideals of democracy," but on the whole he is content with the swiftly unfolding kaleidoscope of travel incident, particularly the startling contrasts between the luxurious modernity in the larger cities and the primitive ways of folk still close to the soil and engaged in handicrafts, riding their burros, prodding their oxen, patting tortillas, gathering pulque, and making their own fun and reverence out of bizarre religious dances and festivals.

The book is all very unpretentious, enjoyable, and painlessly informative.

Fully half of this review should have been devoted to the extraordinarily fine photographs by Mr. Lanks. They are in themselves a real adventure in time and space, truth and beauty, and they reveal the same warm enthusiasm for the people and lands to the south. This is one of the best "picture books" I have ever had on my knee, a satisfying piece of bookmaking. Franck and Lanks provide an excellent introduction to things south, and it should whet the appetite for more.

Carleton Beals, prominent authority on Latin America, is the author of "The Coming Struggle for Latin America," "American Earth," and a forthcoming book, "The Great Circle."

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
A MURDER BY MARRIAGE *Robert George Dean* (Scribner's: $2.)	Lusty, hard-drinking Uncle Horace, head of ditto family, becomes a New Haven corpse. Detective Tony Hunter, free-lancing, is stuck worse'n ever with case his agency rejected.	Wenches, delicious. Banter, amusing. Lore of idiosyncratic, NY, NH & H stations—G.C.T., New Haven, South Sta.—raises familiar memories. Tip-off so simple, it's brilliant.	The guy can pitch
FUGITIVE FROM MURDER *M. V. Heberden* (Crime Club: $2.)	Red headed Desmond Shannon routs, with much bloodshed and sundry personal injuries, murderous mob of Manhattan extortioners.	Except for feeling that no such "socialites" as author describes ever existed, this has everything it takes to thrill and mystify.	Ring-tail roarer
DEATH CONDUCTS A TOUR *Ruth Darby* (Crime Club: $2.)	Peter Barron extracts Virgin Island sleuth Christenson from retirement to solve snuffing out of aged virago in Havana hotel.	Venemous old lady so richly deserved killing that subsequent deaths to cover up initial crime seem needless. Plenty of action.	Average
THE STATION WAGON MURDER *Milton Propper* (Harpers: $2.)	Tommy Rankin helps Penna. state cops solve midnight murder of no-better-than-should-be widow with mercenary social aspirations.	Regrettable moral lapses of Phila. suburban society leaders, with ensuing blackmail, give pungency to deftly constructed yarn with surprise finish.	Standard Brand
THE BOWLING GREEN MURDERS *Helen Woodward and Frances Amherst* (Random House: $2.)	Hapless youngster serving term as brutal slayer of night watchman for Manhattan comm.-merchants saved by young wife's persistent investigating.	Stenographer-sleuth gets into tight places, and perfervid yarn has numerous lurid ramifications before love—and poison—conquers all.	Middlin'

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THE NEW BOOKS

Belles Lettres

1940 ESSAY ANNUAL. By Erich A. Walter. Scott, Foresman. 1940. 312 *pp.* $1.25.

This yearly anthology of American essays presents a variety of famous and not so famous authors in articles, sketches, and reportage reprinted from a long list of magazines and newspapers of comparable distinction. Although one might demur at the blurbal assertion that it "provides a true composite picture of the American Scene—1940," it is sufficiently variegated to at least approximate a retrospect of periodical essaying in the United States during the past year.

Included will be found such well-known names as Charles A. Beard, Sinclair Lewis, Walter Lippmann, Oswald Garrison Villard, Bruce Bliven, Donald Culross Peattie, John Chamberlain, Allan Nevins, Wilson Follett, Leonard Bacon, H. L. Mencken, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, and E. B. White, as well as the editors of *Time, Fortune,* and *The New Yorker.* With true catholicity, the scene is further enlivened by Westbrook Pegler and Leland Stowe.

The subjects dealt with are as refreshingly contrasted as their authors. That Gargantua of Isolation, Charles A. Beard, traces vindictively the history of American nose-poking into foreign squabbles, while the indestructible Mr. Thurber broods with delectable dismay over the Courtship of Animals. Mr. Lippmann expounds with customary *soi-disant* omniscience the lack of American vision. Mr. Tunis expatiates on the sacred responsibilities of a Catcher in Big League Baseball, and the Editors of *Fortune* prove with numbers that there is a God in journalism. Especially astute is an appreciation of a triumvirate of contemporary humorists by the always highly conscious Leonard Bacon.

Other articles treat Language, Education, Social Trends, Peoples and Places, Science, the Outdoors, the Press and War and Peace, the two latter of which, together with Sports, constitute new departments in the present edition.

M. C.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 340)

HOWELLS

CRITICISM AND FICTION

Bad criticism is mischievous enough. . . . We ought not to destroy critics. We ought to reform, or rather transform, them, or turn them from the assumption of authority to a realization of their true function in the civilized state.

MAGISTRATES' COURT. By Henry H. Curran. Scribners. 1940. 197 *pp.* $2.

These brief sketches constitute not only excellent reading, but a useful primer in applied tolerance. Anyone who has been United States Commissioner of Immigration at the Port of New York must necessarily have accumulated a fund of biographical matter as varied and fascinating as, say, the full repertoire of Alexander Woollcott. Similarly, anyone who has been Chief Magistrate of New York City must be nothing less than a walking anthology of short stories. When Judge Curran, who has held both these offices and who is a skillful narrator into the bargain, undertakes to reveal to us the lives of some of the men and women he has met in court, the success of the venture may very nearly be taken for granted at the outset.

It is not quite fair, perhaps, to intimate that Judge Curran is a storyteller in the Woollcott manner, although the two men share a certain feeling for New York's color, its patterns, and its people. Where Mr. Woollcott is as extravagant as Scheherezade, the Judge is economical and plainspoken. He can tell a good story, complete with every essential, in three or four hundred words. It is, as any editor would tearfully concede, a gift.

There is no pretense at style here, and what with the homely nature of the material and the gentle efforts of the Judge to introduce to New Yorkers some of their less fortunate neighbors, the straightforward method is obviously the right one. Sometimes the Judge is content to relate no more than a quiet anecdote of Becky, the Pole, Loai Lo, the Chinese, or others of his friends who have had their ten minutes in the Magistrates' Court, while in "Drug Addict" and "Johnny From Ohio," he does more than that, writing with fine insight and tenderness. Whether or not it was his intention to season his book with a dash or two of literature, these pieces are memorable.

It is interesting to note that like most persons who have fallen into the habit of practising democracy, day in and day out, for years, Judge Curran doesn't bother to mention the word. The book itself is an admirable illustration of how that two-often-profaned concept can be put into practice.

J. R. P.

Biography

THE MOON WAS LOW. By Monica Dickens. Harpers. 1940. 340 *pp.* $2.50.

Another bedtime story from England. Mary Howard, while waiting to learn whether her sailor husband has or has not gone down with his ship, reviews her whole life. Nothing is omitted; not a sight or a sound or a smell or a taste or a touch. We see Mary at school—two schools—Mary at home in London, Mary on vacation in the country, Mary failing to become an actress and succeeding in a mild way as a dress designer, Mary falling in and out of love until the Right Man comes along and a rather painfully dragged out honeymoon ends with the outbreak of the present war.

It's harmless and pleasant enough reading for a wet night in front of the fire, but it won't keep anyone awake. In the light of present conditions in England stories such as this have a certain clinical interest. One hopes they won't become museum pieces.

G. G.

Fiction

THE HOUSE OF LEE. By Gertrude Atherton. Appleton-Century. 1940. 302 *pp.* $2.50.

Miss Atherton's thirty-third novel is as brisk, stubborn, and high-spirited as her first must have been. Certainly the most remarkable feature of "The House of Lee" is the verve of its writer. The story itself, regarded closely, is built on nothing else. It is a kind of orchestration, with the parts distributed to different voices, of a piercing plaint against the great leveller, Depression, and against That Man who did it all with his fiendish New Deal and his awful W.P.A. and his loathsome ideas about labor and democracy. Listen to Lucy Lee, last of the aristocracy: "—where there is no money-making class, or no rich upper class, civilization wobbles and ceases to breed, or reveal genius, or even talent. What has come out of Greece since her downfall? . . . if it ever comes to a revolution, I'll get behind the barricades and shoot to kill—pick out the 'intellectuals' first, if they have the guts to fight." Well, that's clear enough. Miss Atherton goes on to depict the war of economic depression against Character. Character is something possessed by people

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who were rich a hundred years ago. It's something not understood by people who made money later or not at all. With noses delicately flexed, the three women of the House of Lee battle to remain gentlewomen in a world of disturbing realities. Queer stuff to be coming from the bold and iconoclastic Miss Atherton, but, come to think of it, that is a bold position to take these days. Toujours l'audace!

N. L. R.

THE DEVIL AND THE DOCTOR. By David H. Keller. Simon & Schuster. 1940. 308 *pp.* $2.50.

Somerset Maugham has said that literature is an undertaking for professionals. Dr. Keller is a neuropsychiatrist who "likes motoring, bridge, gardening—and writing." As Maugham has also pointed out, the idea of having an elderly, good-hearted, and reflective scholar visited by a loquacious representative of the other world is one that appeals to the philosophic mind taking a creative holiday; and that is the subject of this novel. In this case, the elderly scholar is a doctor with a rural practice, a bookstore as a sideline, two devoted daughters with wealthy husbands, and a lifelong ambition to build the perfect fence, while the visitor purports to be none other than His Satanic Majesty. The complications arise when the villagers, predisposed to superstition—for the locale is Shroudsburg, in the Hex country of Pennsylvania—are stirred to violence by the peculiar phenomena connected with the Doctor's guest.

Fantasy, which seems to offer the writer so much leeway, actually demands of him an especially clear and consistent intention and the weighing of every effect; and it is impossible to say just what response Dr. Keller expects of his readers. Though Doctor Hubler's satisfaction with his own charitable instincts and with his appreciation of the homely rewards life offers is apt to become tiresome, his character is not without appeal. And although the novel clarifies the danger of setting out to write whimsically (the danger being that one will end up writing roguishly), it is cheerful reading page by page. But nothing develops in it. It eddies without flowing. The reader is won over to the Doctor and the Devil both in the first chapter. The Doctor's longing to construct his fence, turns out to be devoid of significance, while the climax merely establishes a fact that one had accepted all along.

C. O., Jr.

International

FROM ENGLAND TO AMERICA: A MESSAGE. By Henry Noel Brailsford. Whittlesey House. 1940. 130 *pp.* $1.

Here is an invitation to the war, sent us by one of England's most distinguished liberals. Mr. Brailsford invites us not only to declare war immediately, but also to prepare a volunteer expeditionary force of 500,000 men. A more eloquent and persuasive statement of the case for intervention can hardly be imagined. Mr. Brailsford both thinks and writes clearly, and his pamphleteering tract—expanded from an article in the June 17 issue of the *New Republic*—is a model of cogent argument and graceful style.

Mr. Brailsford maintains, as do many Americans, that a conflict between Nazi Germany and the United States is inevitable. It is therefore in our interest, says Mr. Brailsford, to enter the hostilities now, if only for the effect which our declaration of war would have upon the morale of the British, German, and Italian peoples.

In issuing this invitation, Mr. Brailsford pleads that he is not a "propagandist," since he has been opposing and criticizing the foreign policy of the British government for twenty-five years. He is merely warning us, he claims, to avoid the tragic mistakes of Britain and France and to act before it is too late.

J. F. G.

In the OCTOBER issue of

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By EDWARD HARRIS HETH

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Records in Review

By Edward Tatnall Canby

A MAJOR revolution has hit the record industry this summer of great cultural import. Columbia, after a short period of price raising, announces in double-spreads a reduction to one dollar flat in the price of all Masterworks records—including the recent $2.25 records—and proportionate reductions in other records.* Victor has abandoned, at least for the moment, its traditional high price policy to match Columbia's move. It remains to be seen whether either company can stand the strain (Columbia tried it once before). Labor exploitation is a possibility. But nonetheless this reviewer is enthusiastic. The phonograph record is an ideal medium for the mating of fine art with the peculiarly American genius for industrial mass production. The one dollar record may become a musical Model T.

★ ★

Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, recorded in Europe by Gieseking and the Saxon State Orchestra, is mechanically the finest recording of piano and orchestra I have heard (Col M-411. 4 r.). The balance is perfect, there is none of the annoying percussive ping still present in most piano records. Mr. Boehm's grade B conducting is balanced by Gieseking's A+piano, incredibly fleet, clean, in contrast to the weightier Schnabel technique (which some will prefer). Also for piano and orchestra, Stravinsky's Capriccio (1928), is played by the powerful Sanroma with his native Boston Symphony. (V M-685. 2 r.) Here is a set that every person with a grain of musical spunk should own. Nowadays almost everyone is crazy over Petrouchka, but our senior music critics are still prone to lament the dullness and dryness of this very un-Wagnerian, un-Brahmsian Stravinsky of 1928-40 and many music-likers resent the omission of a Story to help them "appreciate." But a few playings of this set should convince you that under a harsh exterior the virtues of Petrouchka are found in the Capriccio (though of course this is a relatively small work), the essential Stravinsky style is made more clear. Try the last movement first: note the superb sense of rhythm with which Stravinsky rivals even Bach. . . . Another pair of Haydn and Mozart symphonies have appeared. Perhaps I am a Europophile, but again the European-recorded Haydn "Oxford" (Walter; Paris Cons. Orch. V M-682 3r.) seems to me a better performance than the domestic Mozart "Prague" symphony (Stock; Chicago Symph. Col M-410 3r.). Though both are eminently worth having, the Stock set suffers a bit from echo and poor monitoring, and is not as impeccable as it should be in performance.

**Albums 50c extra. Instead of prices, RECORDS IN REVIEW will quote the number of records in each set, pending stabilization of the price question.*

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TRADE WINDS

P. E. G. QUERCUS

A. E. N.

AS we go to press we hear of the death of Mr. A. Edward Newton, after long illness. For a whole generation of readers, Mr. Newton was the A.B.C. *(Amenities of Book-Collecting)* of high spirits in print. Few bibliophiles in any age have carried over into printed text so much essence of temperament. One can almost be thankful that the Caliph, as some of his intimates always called him, did not have to endure any longer the agony of his Old Lady London, the city which few living men have known or loved better than he. He said once of the Thames (which he loved to compare, to their disadvantage, with other noble rivers) that "distance, like time, should be measured by events: this would give Father Thames greater length than Amazon and Mississippi placed end to end." So if we reckon lives by their enthusiasms, crotchets and kindnesses, Eddie Newton's was one of the longest and happiest in English literature.

★ ★

Envelope Stuffer

☞Old Q.'s biggest treasure trove last week was the porter in a Pullman car. We had taken the train in haste and more or less at random; we asked the porter which one it was. ☞He said "The Du Quince Limited," which pleased us as a form of *Duquesne.* ☞Speaking of treasures, for a long time we've been promising to set down for H. S., an acute student of sociology, our private memo on Envelope Stuffers. ☞In the publicity professions an Envelope Stuffer is a small slip-in of merchandising cajolery which can be enclosed with correspondence without exceeding the postage limit. It may deal with the subject of the letter, or it may be a shot at random or tangent. ☞Our own Envelope Stuffer, we've been telling H. S. for years, would be an unconscious revelation of what, in the lifetime of one wallet, had seemed most precious to preserve —both for stimulus of memory and for safeguard in any supreme jeopardy. ☞H. S. definitely predicts a fiscal jeopardy under certain political conditions. If it happens, the following seem to constitute our platinum ration. ☞Here, then, candidly enumerated, is our Stuffed Envelope or pericardium (viz. a membranous sac containing the heart):—

☞Social Security Card issued per Saturday Review Co. ☞Statler Hotels credit card. ☞New Yorker Hotel ditto. ☞Memo pledging not to publish a certain MS (written by ourself) without careful thought pro and con. (It has not been published). ☞Membership card in the Society for the Prevention of Calling Pullman Porters George. ☞Membership card in a college alumni association (admitting to football games). ☞Sketch-map showing how to reach the home of a publisher in Connecticut. ☞Autograph of a redheaded taxi-driver, written on back of receipt slip of Yellow Cab. Co., Chicago. ☞Toll receipts for three bridge-crossings over the Mississippi River (at Hannibal, Burlington, and Fort Madison). ☞Snapshot of Tom Sawyer's fence being whitewashed at Hannibal, Mo. ☞Newspaper clipping re death of a journalist with whom we once had argument about plagiarism. ☞Several snapshots of only personal concern. ☞Membership ribbon, never worn, in the National Institute of Arts and Letters. ☞A French 100-franc note, 1927 issue. ☞A Swiss stamp with a beautiful little engraving of the League of Nations building. ☞A French stamp, sent us by Harry Hansen, of Alphonse Daudet's windmill. ☞A poem by Thomas Hardy which we copied out on a card. ☞Clipping of a poem by Laura Riding. ☞Clipping of a poem by ourself (dating from about 1918). ☞Receipt from a liquor store in Frankford, Pa., for purchase of a bottle of Cobb's Creek rye whiskey. (Cobb's Creek, Pa., was the first stream we ever bathed in. The rye whiskey was a present to a bookseller, to be preserved for some specially luminous occasion). ☞A scrap of blotter impregnated with a perfume called *Aphrodisia.* ☞A calendar, issued by the American Banknote Co., giving all days of the week from 1753 to 2000. On this card we learned that the 1st of January 2000 will be a Saturday. ☞A pass on the Panama Railroad, good for free transit across the Canal Zone, but not valid after Dec. 31, 1936. ☞A flight memo of the American Airlines, dated 4000 feet above Allentown, Pa. going West. ☞A pass on the Toonerville Trolley; this a Xmas card jape from our old friend Fontaine Fox. ☞A page from the latest Sears Roebuck catalogue. ☞A friend's bookplate. ☞An unused admission ticket to the World's Fair. ☞A clipping from F.P.A.'s column in the N. Y. *Post* in which (last January) we made a political prediction. ☞And Long Island Railroad timetables.

★ ★

☞The above number 30 items; most of them not preserved for any immediately practical purpose, but in some subconscience of what was important —either to refresh the past or as fortress in future. It is as good a testimonial as any of what life meant for one mediocre citizen in the year 1940.

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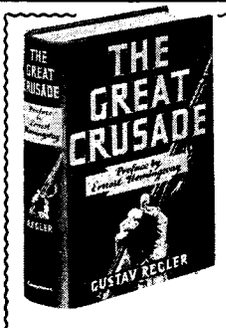

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Double-Crostics: No. 341

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

■	■	■	1-S	2-C	■	3-R	4-X	5-A	6-H	7-W	■	8-G	9-I	10-O	11-C	■		
12-K	13-I	14-G	15-Y	16-D	■	17-N	18-G	19-F	■	20-X	21-P	22-M	23-A	24-B	25-C	■		
26-A	27-H	28-W	29-K	30-D	31-X	32-P	■	33-D	34-J	35-Z	■	36-T	37-M	38-C	39-Q	■		
40-K	41-X	42-G	43-W	44-R	45-A	46-V	47-O	48-L	■	49-I	50-Z	51-V	■	52-Y	53-W	54-X		
55-H	56-O	57-Q	58-V	■	59-D	60-M	61-Z	■	62-S	63-Q	64-B	■	65-I	66-O	67-U	68-Z		
■	69-K	70-Y	71-N	72-B	73-Q	■	74-O	75-U	76-G	77-N	78-D	■	79-V	80-S	81-E	82-F		
83-H	84-I	■	85-B	86-M	87-O	■	88-C	■	89-J	90-O	91-Y	92-I	■	93-W	94-Q	95-P		
■	96-G	97-C	98-Z	99-U	100-L	■	101-W	102-U	103-Q	104-T	105-S	106-E	107-P	■	108-T	109-M		
110-N	■	111-P	112-Y	■	113-Z	114-T	115-O	116-Q	117-S	118-J	119-B	■	120-D	121-P	■	122-J		
123-P	124-T	125-I	■	126-P	127-B	128-M	■	129-H	130-N	131-J	132-X	133-K	134-U	■	135-W	136-Z		
137-C	138-D	■	139-E	140-Y	141-V	142-N	143-U	144-R	145-K	■	146-M	147-F	148-A	■	149-F	150-E		
■	151-W	152-L	153-H	154-T	■	155-X	156-U	157-T	158-Z	■	159-G	160-A	161-S	162-X	163-H	164-N		
■	165-J	166-S	167-T	■	168-F	169-Y	170-R	171-P	■	172-N	173-Z	174-T	175-R	■	176-R	177-E		
178-O	179-D	180-V	■	181-N	182-V	183-X	184-K	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 19 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. At all.

B. Designating the nape of the neck.

C. Brother of Caleb (Judges III).

D. Trifling, worthless.

E. Novel by Charles Kingsley.

F. Mother of Adonis.

G. Queen Anne Tory Club.

H. Disheveled.

I. Character in "Merry Wives of Windsor."

J. Gallant British Admiral (1653-1702).

K. Habitual users.

L. Cape; headland.

M. Comedy by Jonson (2 wds.)

N. Heedless.

O. Parisian working girl.

P. Incineration.

Q. Russian herding dog.

R. Insipid, void of substance.

S. Something offensive to the sight.

T. Long, close-fitting cloak.

U. English printer and author (1745-1826).

V. Judaeo-German.

W. Kind of typesetting machine.

X. Unmerciful, harsh.

Y. Dukedom of Mowbray ("Richard II").

Z. Plain; direct (Hist. Engl.)

WORDS

160	5	23	26	45	148				
119	64	72	127	85	24				
2	38	97	137	88	11	25			
179	120	16	59	138	30	78	33		
150	177	81	139	106					
149	168	19	82	147					
18	8	96	14	159	76	42			
163	6	55	27	153	129	83			
84	125	49	13	92	9	65			
131	118	165	122	34	89				
12	145	184	133	29	69	40			
100	152	48							
60	128	146	37	86	109	22			
71	142	164	77	172	110	17	130	181	
10	90	87	66	178	47	74	115	56	
126	32	95	21	171	123	121	111	107	
63	116	57	103	39	94	73			
3	144	176	170	44	175				
117	62	80	1	166	161	105			
157	114	36	174	108	167	104	154	124	
143	99	134	75	102	67	156			
180	182	46	51	141	58	79			
28	135	151	53	93	7	101	43		
155	162	54	132	4	31	41	183	20	
15	70	52	112	169	91	140			
61	35	50	136	158	173	113	68	98	

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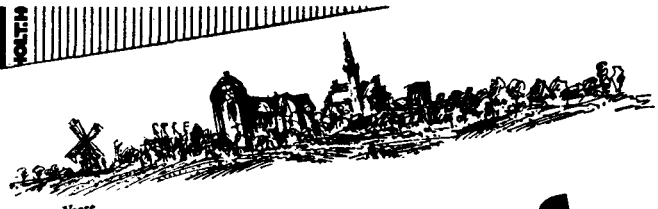

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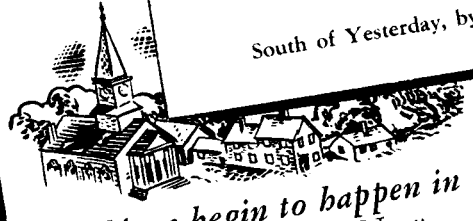

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